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PRESIDENT J. EDWARDS,
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VOLUME VIII.

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| I. FIVE SERMONS ON DIFFERENT OCCASIONS. | III. REMARKS ON IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES. |
| II. MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS. | IV. DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF A WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. |

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FIVE
SERMONS
ON
DIFFERENT OCCASIONS,

SEPARATELY PUBLISHED
IN MR. EDWARDS'S LIFE-TIME.

VOL. VIII.

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SERMON I.*

A DIVINE AND SUPERNATURAL LIGHT, IMMEDIATELY IMPARTED
TO THE SOUL BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, SHOWN TO BE
BOTH A SCRIPTURAL AND RATIONAL DOCTRINE.

MATT. xvi. 17.

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou
Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed
it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

CHRIST addresses these words to Peter upon occasion of his professing his faith in him as the Son of God. Our Lord was inquiring of his disciples, whom men said that he was; not that he needed to be informed, but only to introduce and give occasion to what follows. They answer, that some said he was John the Baptist, and some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. When they had thus given an account whom others said that he was, Christ asks them, whom they said that he was? Simon Peter, whom we find always zealous and forward, was the first to answer: He readily replied to the question, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.*

Upon this occasion, Christ says as he does to him and of him in the text: In which we may observe,

1. That Peter is pronounced blessed on this account.—*Blessed art thou*—“Thou art an happy man, that thou art not ignorant of this, that I am *Christ, the Son of the living God.*

* Preached at Northampton, and published at the desire of some of the Hearers, in the year 1734.

Thou art distinguishingly happy. Others are blinded, and have dark and deluded apprehensions, as you have now given an account, some thinking that I am Elias, and some that I am Jeremias, and some one thing, and some another; but none of them thinking right, all of them misled. Happy art thou, that art so distinguished as to know the truth in this matter."

2. The evidence of this his happiness declared; viz. That God, and he *only*, had *revealed it* to him. This is an evidence of his being *blessed*.

First, As it shows how peculiarly favoured he was of God above others: q. d. "How highly favoured art thou, that others, wise and great men, the Scribes, Pharisees, and Rulers, and the nation in general, are left in darkness, to follow their own misguided apprehensions; and that thou shouldst be singled out, as it were, by name, that my heavenly Father should thus set his love on *thee Simon Bar-jona*.—This argues thee *blessed*, that thou shouldst thus be the object of God's distinguishing love."

Secondly, It evidences his blessedness also, as it intimates that this knowledge is above any that *flesh and blood* can reveal. "This is such knowledge as only my *Father which is in heaven* can give: It is too high and excellent to be communicated by such means as other knowledge is. Thou art *blessed*, that thou knowest what God alone can teach thee."

The original of this knowledge is here declared, both negatively and positively. *Positively*, as God is here declared the author of it. *Negatively*, as it is declared, that *flesh and blood* had *not revealed it*. God is the author of all knowledge and understanding whatsoever. He is the author of all moral prudence, and of the skill that men have in their secular business. Thus it is said of all in Israel that were *wisc-hearted*, and skilled in embroidering, that God had *filled them with the spirit of wisdom*. Exod. xxviii. 3.

God is the author of such knowledge; yet so that *flesh and blood* reveals it. Mortal men are capable of imparting the knowledge of human arts and sciences, and skill in temporal affairs. God is the author of such knowledge by those means: *Flesh and blood* is employed as the *mediate* or *second* cause of it; he conveys it by the power and influence of natural means. But this spiritual knowledge, spoken of in the text, is what God is the author of, and none else: He *reveals it*, and *flesh and blood* reveals it *not*. He imparts this knowledge immedi-

ately, not making use of any intermediate natural causes, as he does in other knowledge.

What had passed in the preceding discourse naturally occasioned Christ to observe this ; because the disciples had been telling how others did not know him, but were generally mistaken about him, divided and confounded in their opinions of him : but Peter had declared his assured faith, that he was the *Son of God*. Now it was natural to observe, how it was not *flesh and blood* that had *revealed it to him*, but God ; for if this knowledge were dependent on natural causes or means, how came it to pass that they, a company of poor fishermen, illiterate men, and persons of low education, attained to the knowledge of the truth ; while the Scribes and Pharisees, men of vastly higher advantages, and greater knowledge and sagacity in other matters, remained in ignorance ? This could be owing only to the gracious distinguishing influence and revelation of the Spirit of God. Hence, what I would make the subject of my present discourse from these words, is this

DOCTRINE,

That there is such a thing as a spiritual and Divine Light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means.—And on this subject I would,

I. Show what this divine light is.

II. How it is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means.

III. Show the truth of the doctrine.

And then conclude with a brief improvement.

I. I would show what this spiritual and divine light is. And in order to it, would shew,

First, In a few things what it is not. And here,

1. Those convictions that natural men may have of their sin and misery, is not this spiritual and divine light. Men in a natural condition may have convictions of the guilt that lies upon them, and of the anger of God, and their danger of divine vengeance. Such convictions are from the light of truth. That some sinners have a greater conviction of their guilt and misery than others, is because some have more

light, or more of an apprehension of truth than others. And this light and conviction may be from the Spirit of God ; the Spirit convinces men of sin : but yet nature is much more concerned in it than in the communication of that spiritual and divine light that is spoken of in the doctrine ; it is from the Spirit of God only as assisting natural principles, and not as infusing any new principles. Common grace differs from special, in that it influences only by assisting of nature ; and not by imparting grace, or bestowing any thing above nature. The light that is obtained is wholly natural, or of no superior kind to what mere nature attains to, though more of that kind be obtained than would be obtained if men were left wholly to themselves : Or, in other words, common grace only assists the faculties of the soul to do that more fully which they do by nature, as natural conscience or reason will by mere nature make a man sensible of guilt, and will accuse and condemn him when he has done amiss. Conscience is a principle natural to men ; and the work that it doth naturally, or of itself, is to give an apprehension of right and wrong, and to suggest to the mind the relation that there is between right and wrong and a retribution. The Spirit of God, in those convictions which unregenerate men sometimes have, assists conscience to do this work in a further degree than it would do if they were left to themselves. He helps it against those things that tend to stupify it, and obstruct its exercise. But in the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, those things are wrought in the soul that are above nature, and of which there is nothing of the like kind in the soul by nature ; and they are caused to exist in the soul habitually, and according to such a stated constitution or law that lays such a foundation for exercises in a continued course as is called a principle of nature. Not only are remaining principles assisted to do their work more freely and fully, but those principles are restored that were utterly destroyed by the fall ; and the mind thenceforward habitually exerts those acts that the dominion of sin had made it as wholly destitute of as a dead body is of vital acts.

The Spirit of God acts in a very different manner in the one case, from what he doth in the other. He may indeed act upon the mind of a natural man, but he acts in the mind of a saint as an indwelling vital principle. He acts upon the mind of an unregenerate person as an extrinsic occasional agent ; for in acting upon them, he doth not unite himself to them ; for notwithstanding all his influences that they may

possess, they are still sensual, having not the Spirit. Jude 19. But he unites himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and influences him as a new supernatural principle of life and action. There is thus difference, that the Spirit of God, in acting in the soul of a godly man, exerts and communicates himself there in his own proper nature. Holiness is the proper nature of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit operates in the minds of the godly, by uniting himself to them, and living in them, and exerting his own nature in the exercise of their faculties. The Spirit of God may act upon a creature, and yet not in acting communicate himself. The Spirit of God may act upon inanimate creatures; as, *the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters*, in the beginning of the creation; so the Spirit of God may act upon the minds of men many ways, and communicate himself no more than when he acts upon an inanimate creature. For instance, he may excite thoughts in them, may assist their natural reason and understanding, or may assist other natural principles, and this without any union with the soul, but may act, as it were, upon an external object. But as he acts in his holy influences and spiritual operations, he acts in a way of peculiar communication of himself; so that the subject is thence denominated spiritual.

2. This spiritual and divine light does not consist in any impression made upon the imagination. It is no impression upon the mind, as though one saw any thing with the bodily eyes. It is no imagination or idea of an outward light or glory, or any beauty of form or countenance, or a visible lustre or brightness of any object. The imagination may be strongly impressed with such things; but this is not spiritual light. Indeed when the mind has a lively discovery of spiritual things, and is greatly affected by the power of divine light, it may, and probably very commonly doth, much affect the imagination; so that impressions of an outward beauty or brightness may accompany those spiritual discoveries. But spiritual light is not that impression upon the imagination, but an exceedingly different thing. Natural men may have lively impressions on their imaginations; and we cannot determine but that the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light, may cause imaginations of an outward beauty, or visible glory, and of sounds and speeches, and other such things; but these are things of a vastly inferior nature to spiritual light.

3. This spiritual light is not the suggesting of any new truths or propositions not contained in the word of God. This

suggesting of new truths or doctrines to the mind, independent of any antecedent revelation of those propositions, either in word or writing, is inspiration; such as the prophets and apostles had, and such as some enthusiasts pretend to. But this spiritual light that I am speaking of, is quite a different thing from inspiration. It reveals no new doctrine, it suggests no new proposition to the mind, it teaches no new thing of God, or Christ, or another world, not taught in the Bible, but only gives a due apprehension of those things that are taught in the word of God.

4. It is not every affecting view that men have of religious things that is this spiritual and divine light. Men by mere principles of nature are capable of being affected with things that have a special relation to religion as well as other things. A person by mere nature, for instance, may be liable to be affected with the story of Jesus Christ, and the sufferings he underwent, as well as by any other tragical story. He may be the more affected with it from the interest he conceives mankind to have in it. Yea, he may be affected with it without believing it; as well as a man may be affected with what he reads in a romance, or sees acted in a stage-play. He may be affected with a lively and eloquent description of many pleasant things that attend the state of the blessed in heaven, as well as his imagination be entertained by a romantic description of the pleasantness of fairy land, or the like. And a common belief of the truth of such things, from education or otherwise, may help forward their affection. We read in Scripture of many that were greatly affected with things of a religious nature, who yet are there represented as wholly graceless, and many of them very ill men. A person therefore may have affecting views of the things of religion, and yet be very destitute of spiritual light. Flesh and blood may be the author of this: One man may give another an affecting view of divine things with but common assistance; but God alone can give a spiritual discovery of them.—But I proceed to show,

Secondly, Positively what this spiritual and divine light is.

And it may be thus described: A true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising. This spiritual light primarily consists in the former of these, viz. A real sense and apprehension of the divine excellency of things revealed in the word of God. A spiritual and saving conviction of the truth and reality of these things,

arises from such a sight of their divine excellency and glory ; so that this conviction of their truth is an effect and natural consequence of this sight of their divine glory. There is therefore in this spiritual light;

1. A true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of the things of religion ; a real sense of the excellency of God and Jesus Christ, and of the work of redemption, and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel. There is a divine and superlative glory in these things ; an excellency that is of a vastly higher kind, and more sublime nature than in other things ; a glory greatly distinguishing them from all that is earthly and temporal. He that is spiritually enlightened truly apprehends and sees it, or has a sense of it. He does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. There is not only a rational belief that God is holy, and that holiness is a good thing, but there is a sense of the loveliness of God's holiness. There is not only a speculatively judging that God is gracious, but a sense how amiable God is on account of the beauty of this divine attribute.

There is a twofold knowledge of good of which God has made the mind of man capable. The first, that which is merely notional ; as when a person only speculatively judges that any thing is, which, by the agreement of mankind, is called good or excellent, viz. that which is most to general advantage, and between which and a reward there is a suitableness,—and the like. And the other is, that which consists in the sense of the heart : as when the heart is sensible of pleasure and delight in the presence of the idea of it. In the former is exercised merely the speculative faculty, or the understanding, in distinction from the will or disposition of the soul. In the latter, the will, or inclination, or heart are mainly concerned.

Thus there is a difference between having an *opinion*, that God is holy and gracious, and having a *sense* of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former, that knows not how honey tastes ; but a man cannot have the latter unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his mind. So there is a difference between believing that a person is beautiful, and having a sense of his beauty. The former may be obtained by hearsay, but the latter only by seeing the countenance. When the heart is sensible of the

beauty and amiableness of a thing, it necessarily feels pleasure in the apprehension. It is implied in a person's being heartily sensible of the loveliness of a thing, that the idea of it is pleasant to his soul; which is a far different thing from having a rational opinion that it is excellent.

2. There arises from this sense of the divine excellency of things contained in the word of God, a conviction of the truth and reality of them; and that either indirectly or directly.

First, Indirectly, and that two ways,

1. As the prejudices of the heart, against the truth of divine things, are hereby removed; so that the mind becomes susceptible of the due force of rational arguments for their truth. The mind of man is naturally full of prejudices against divine truth. It is full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind. But when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys the enmity removes those prejudices, sanctifies the reason, and causes it to lie open to the force of arguments for their truth.

Hence was the different effect that Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples, from what they had to convince the Scribes and Pharisees. Not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, that the Scribes and Pharisees were under, were removed by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ, and his doctrine.

2 It not only removes the hindrances of reason, but positively helps reason. It makes even the speculative notions more lively. It engages the attention of the mind, with more fixedness and intenseness to that kind of objects; which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and enables it more clearly to see their mutual relations, and occasions it to take more notice of them. The ideas themselves that otherwise are dim and obscure, are by this means impressed with the greater strength, and have a light cast upon them; so that the mind can better judge of them. As he that beholds objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them, is under greater advantage to discern them in their true forms and natural relations, than he that sees them in a dim twilight.

The mind being sensible of the excellency of divine objects, dwells upon them with delight; and the powers of the soul are more awakened and enlivened to employ them-

selves in the contemplation of them, and exert themselves more fully and much more to purpose. The beauty of the objects draws on the faculties, and draws forth their exercises: So that reason itself is under far greater advantages for its proper and free exercises, and to attain its proper end, free of darkness and delusion.—But,

Secondly, A true sense of the divine excellency of the things of God's word doth more directly and immediately convince us of their truth; and that because the excellency of these things is so superlative. There is a beauty in them so divine and godlike, that it greatly and evidently distinguishes them from things merely human, or that of which men are the inventors and authors; a glory so high and great, that when clearly seen, commands assent to their divine reality. When there is an actual and lively discovery of this beauty and excellency, it will not allow of any such thought as that it is the fruit of men's invention. This is a kind of intuitive and immediate evidence. They believe the doctrines of God's word to be divine, because they see a divine, and transcendent, and most evidently distinguishing glory in them; such a glory as, if clearly seen, does not leave room to doubt of their being of God, and not of men.

Such a conviction of the truths of religion as this, arising from a sense of their divine excellency, is included in saving faith. And this original of it, is that by which it is most essentially distinguished from that common assent, of which unregenerate men are capable.

II. I proceed now to the second thing proposed, viz. To show how this light is immediately given by God, and not obtained by natural means.* And here,

* In the preceding statement and the following explanation, our author might have rendered the subject of "divine light immediately imparted to the soul" more perspicuous, by a fuller use of that *analogy* which the scripture holds forth, between the common theory of vision and the doctrine he defends. Let the remarks which follow be candidly considered.

1. In the sacred scriptures, God is represented as "the father of lights," and Christ as "the sun of righteousness." Yea, it is asserted, that "God is LIGHT," and that he "shines into the heart." These and similar expressions, with which the Old and New Testament abound, shew that there is a strong analogy between light in the natural world, and something spiritual that is expressed by the same term.

2. As the light of day proceeds from the natural sun, and shines into the eye; so the spiritual or supernatural light proceeds from God, and shines into the heart, or *mind*. Thus the analogy holds, not only as to the *things* intended—in their sources, and their emanations—but also as to the *organs* of reception.

1. It is not intended that the natural faculties are not used in it. They are the subject of this light; and in such a manner, that they are not merely passive, but active in it. God, in letting in this light into the soul, deals with man according to his nature, and makes use of his rational faculties. But yet this light is not the less immediately from God for that; the faculties are made use of as the subject, and not as the cause. As the use we make of our eyes in beholding various objects, when the sun arises, is not the cause of the light that discovers those objects to us.

2. It is not intended that outward means have no concern in this affair. It is not in this affair, as in inspiration, where new truths are suggested: for by this light is given only a due apprehension of the same truths that are revealed in the word of God; and therefore it is not given without the word. The gospel is employed in this affair. This light is the "light of the glorious gospel of Christ." 2. Cor. iv. 4. The gospel is as a glass, by which this light is conveyed to us. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "Now we see through a glass."—But,

3. The existence of light in the eye depends neither on the perception of it, nor on any external object. Our perception of illuminated objects is the effect of light's existence in the organ of vision. Without light both in the eye, and on the object to be seen, there can be no perception of that object. In like manner, the existence of that light which emanates from God, and shines into the mind, is there (that is in the mind) prior to, and independent on the mental perception of it; and consequently is there irrespective of the knowledge of objects to be known by it.—Therefore,

4. Knowledge can be called "light" only in a secondary sense, both naturally and spiritually; that is, by a metonymy, because it is the effect of light. We know a visible object, because we see it; and we see it, because light shines both on the object, and into the eye. It is by divine light shining into the mind that we have a spiritual knowledge of God, of Christ, or of any other object; in other words, a holy emanation or influence from God, called light, is the cause why any person or thing is known in a spiritual manner.

5. When any identify this divine light, these rays of the sun of righteousness, with knowledge, (however spiritual and excellent) because the latter is metonymically called "light," they are chargeable with identifying cause and effect, and therefore of confounding things which essentially differ. For spiritual light, in the primary and proper sense, emanates immediately from God, as rays from the sun; but this cannot be said of knowledge, because the perception of an object, which is our act, must intervene. Knowledge presupposes the primary light, and is also dependent on the objective truths perceived. All knowledge, whether natural or spiritual, stands essentially related to objects known; so that without those objects it can have no existence. The knowledge of objects to be seen, therefore, is the effect of two causes concurring, the object itself and light; whereas the divine light which is immediately imparted to the soul, has but one cause, even the sovereign will of God.

6. Coroll. The theological notion which makes all spiritual light in man to consist in knowledge, and which is become too fashionable in the present day, is contrary to scripture, and to rational analogy.—W.

3. When it is said that this light is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means, hereby is intended, that it is given by God without making use of any means that operate by their own power or natural force. God makes use of means; but it is not as mediate causes to produce this effect. There are not truly any second causes of it; but it is produced by God immediately. The word of God is no proper cause of this effect; but is made use of only to convey to the mind the subject-matter of this saving instruction: And this indeed it doth convey to us by natural force or influence. It conveys to our minds these doctrines; it is the cause of a notion of them in our heads, but not of the sense of their divine excellency in our hearts. Indeed a person cannot have spiritual light without the word. But that does not argue, that the word properly causes that light. The mind cannot see the excellency of any doctrine, unless that doctrine be first in the mind; but seeing the excellency of the doctrine may be immediately from the Spirit of God; though the conveying of the doctrine or proposition itself may be by the word. So that the notions which are the subject matter of this light, are conveyed to the mind by the word of God; but that due sense of the heart, wherein this light formally consists, is immediately by the Spirit of God. As for instance, the notion that there is a Christ, and that Christ is holy and gracious, is conveyed to the mind by the word of God; But the sense of the excellency of Christ by reason of that holiness and grace, is nevertheless immediately the work of the Holy Spirit.—I come now,

III. To show the truth of the doctrine; that is, to show that there is such a thing as that spiritual light that has been described, thus immediately let into the mind by God. And here I would shew briefly, that this doctrine is both *scriptural* and *rational*.

First, It is Scriptural. My text is not only full to the purpose, but it is a doctrine with which the Scripture abounds. We are there abundantly taught, that the saints differ from the ungodly in this, that they have the knowledge of God, and a sight of God, and of Jesus Christ. I shall mention but few texts out of many: 1 John iii. 6. "Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, nor known him." 3. John 11. "He that doth good, is of God: but he that doth evil, hath not seen God" John xiv. 19. "The world seeth me no more; but ye see me." John xvii. 3. "And this is eternal life,

that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This knowledge, or sight of God and Christ, cannot be a mere speculative knowledge; because it is spoken of as that wherein they differ from the ungodly. And by these Scriptures it must not only be a different knowledge in degree and circumstances, and different in its effects; but it must be entirely different in nature and kind

And this light and knowledge is always spoken of as immediately given of God; Matth. xi. 25—27. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it is seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Here this effect is ascribed exclusively to the arbitrary operation and gift of God bestowing this knowledge on whom he will, and distinguishing those with it who have the least natural advantage or means for knowledge, even babes, when it is denied to the wise and prudent. And imparting this knowledge is here appropriated to the Son of God, as his sole prerogative. And again, 2 Cor. iv. 6. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." This plainly shows, that there is a discovery of the divine superlative glory and excellency of God and Christ, peculiar to the saints: and also, that it is as immediately from God, as light from the sun: and that it is the immediate effect of his power and will. For it is compared to God's creating the light by his powerful word in the beginning of the creation; and is said to be by the Spirit of the Lord, in the 18th verse of the preceding chapter. God is spoken of as giving the knowledge of Christ in conversion, as of what before was hidden and unseen, Gal. i. 15, 16. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me."—The Scripture also speaks plainly of such a knowledge of the word of God, as has been described, as the immediate gift of God; Psal. cxix. 18. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." What could the Psalmist mean, when he begged of God to open his eyes? Was he ever blind? Might he not have resort to the law and see every word and sentence

in it when he pleased? And what could he mean by those wondrous things. Were they the wonderful stories of the creation, and deluge, and Israel's passing through the Red Sea, and the like? Were not his eyes open to read these strange things when he would? Doubtless by wondrous things in God's law, he had respect to those distinguishing and wonderful excellencies, and marvellous manifestations of the divine perfections and glory contained in the commands and doctrines of the word, and those works and counsels of God that were there revealed. So the Scripture speaks of a knowledge of God's dispensation and covenant of mercy and way of grace towards his people, as peculiar to the saints, and given only by God, Psal. xxv. 14. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant."

And that a true and saving belief of the truth of religion is that which arises from such a discovery, is also what the Scripture teaches. As John vi. 40. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life;" where it is plain that a true faith is what arises from a spiritual sight of Christ. And, John xvii. 6, 7, 8. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.—Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me;" where Christ's manifesting God's name to the disciples, or giving them the knowledge of God, was that whereby they knew that Christ's doctrine was of God, and that Christ himself proceeded from him, and was sent by him. Again, John xii. 44, 45, 46. "Jesus cried and said, he that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness." There believing in Christ, and spiritually seeing him, are parallel.

Christ condemns the Jews, that they did not know that he was the Messiah, and that his doctrine was true, from an inward distinguishing taste and relish of what was divine, in Luke xii. 56, 57. He having there blamed the Jews, that though they could discern the face of the sky and of the earth, and signs of the weather, that yet they could not discern those times—or as it is expressed in Matthew, the signs of those times—adds, "yea, and why even of your own selves, judge

ye not what is right?" i. e. without extrinsic signs. Why have ye not that sense of true excellency, whereby ye may distinguish that which is holy and divine? Why have ye not that savour of the things of God, by which you may see the distinguishing glory, and evident divinity of me and my doctrine?

The Apostle Peter mentions it as what gave him and his companions good and well-grounded assurance of the truth of the gospel, that they had seen the divine glory of Christ.—2 Pet. 1. 16. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty." The Apostle has respect to that visible glory of Christ which they saw in his transfiguration: That glory was so divine, having such an ineffable appearance and semblance of divine holiness, majesty, and grace, that it evidently denoted him to be a divine person. But if a sight of Christ's outward glory might give a rational assurance of his divinity, why may not an apprehension of his spiritual glory do so too? Doubtless Christ's spiritual glory is in itself as distinguishing, and as plainly shows his divinity, as his outward glory,—nay, a great deal more: for his spiritual glory is that wherein his divinity consists: and the outward glory of his transfiguration shewed him to be divine, only as it was a remarkable image or representation of that spiritual glory. Doubtless, therefore, he that has had a clear sight of the spiritual glory of Christ, may say, I have not followed cunningly devised fables, but have been an eye-witness of his majesty, upon as good grounds as the Apostle, when he had respect to the outward glory of Christ that he had seen. But this brings me to what was proposed next, viz. to show that,

Secondly, This doctrine is rational.

1. It is rational to suppose, that there is really such an excellency in divine things—so transcendent and exceedingly different from what is in other things—that, if it were seen, would most evidently distinguish them. We cannot rationally doubt but that things divine, which appertain to the supreme Being, are vastly different from things that are human; that there is a high, glorious, and god-like excellency in them, that does most remarkably difference them from the things that are of men; insomuch that if the difference were but seen, it would have a convincing, satisfying influence upon any one, that they are divine. What reason can be offered against

it? unless we would argue, that God is not remarkably distinguished in glory from men.

If Christ should now appear to any one as he did on the mount at his transfiguration; or if he should appear to the world in his heavenly glory, as he will do at the day of judgment; without doubt, his glory and majesty would be such as would satisfy every one, that he was a divine person, and that religion was true: and it would be a most reasonable, and well-grounded conviction too. And why may there not be that stamp of divinity, or divine glory on the word of God, on the scheme and doctrine of the gospel, that may be in like manner distinguishing and as rationally convincing, provided it be but seen? It is rational to suppose, that when God speaks to the world, there should be something in his word vastly different from men's word. Supposing that God never had spoken to the world, but we had notice that he was about to reveal himself from heaven, and speak to us immediately himself, or that he should give us a book of his own inditing; after what manner should we expect that he would speak? Would it not be rational to suppose, that his speech would be exceeding different from men's speech, that there should be such an excellency and sublimity in his word, such a stamp of wisdom, holiness, majesty, and other divine perfections, that the word of men, yea of the wisest of men, should appear mean and base in comparison of it? Doubtless it would be thought rational to expect this, and unreasonable to think otherwise. When a wise man speaks in the exercise of his wisdom, there is something in every thing he says, that is very distinguishable from the talk of a little child. So, without doubt, and much more is the speech of God, to be distinguished from that of the wisest of men; agreeable to Jer. xxiii. 28, 29. God having there been reproving the false prophets that prophesied in his name, and pretended that what they spake was his word, when indeed it was their own word, says, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully: what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

2. If there be such a distinguishing excellency in divine things; it is rational to suppose that there may be such a thing as seeing it. What should hinder but that it may be seen? It is no argument, that there is no such distinguishing excel-

lency, or that it cannot be seen, because some do not see it, though they may be discerning men in temporal matters. It is not rational to suppose, if there be any such excellency in divine things, that wicked men should see it. Is it rational to suppose, that those whose minds are full of spiritual pollution, and under the power of filthy lusts, should have any relish or sense of divine beauty or excellency; or that their minds should be susceptible of that light that is in its own nature so pure and heavenly? It need not seem at all strange, that sin should so blind the mind, seeing that men's particular natural tempers and dispositions will so much blind them in secular matters; as when men's natural temper is melancholy, jealous, fearful, proud, or the like.

3. It is rational to suppose, that this knowledge should be given immediately by God, and not be obtained by natural means. Upon what account should it seem unreasonable, that there should be any immediate communication between God and the creature? It is strange that men should make any matter of difficulty of it. Why should not he that made all things, still have something immediately to do with the things that he has made? Where lies the great difficulty, if we own the being of a God, and that he created all things out of nothing, of allowing some immediate influence of God on the creation still? And if it be reasonable to suppose it with respect to any part of the creation, it is especially so with respect to reasonable intelligent creatures; who are next to God in the gradation of the different orders of beings, and whose business is most immediately with God; and reason teaches that man was made to serve and glorify his Creator. And if it be rational to suppose that God immediately communicates himself to man in any affair, it is in this. It is rational to suppose that God would reserve that knowledge and wisdom, which is of such a divine and excellent nature, to be bestowed immediately by himself; and that it should not be left in the power of second causes. Spiritual wisdom and grace is the highest and most excellent gift that ever God bestows on any creature: in this the highest excellency and perfection of a rational creature consists. It is also immensely the most important of all divine gifts: it is that wherein man's happiness consists, and on which his everlasting welfare depends. How rational is it to suppose that God, however he has left lower gifts to second causes, and in some sort in their power, yet should reserve this most excellent, divine, and important of all divine communications, in his own hands, to be bestowed

immediately by himself, as a thing too great for second causes to be concerned in? It is rational to suppose, that this blessing should be immediately from God, for there is no gift or benefit that is in itself so nearly related to the divine nature. Nothing which the creature receives is so much a participation of the deity: it is a kind of emanation of God's beauty, and is related to God as the light is to the sun. It is therefore congruous and fit, that when it is given of God, it should be immediately from himself, and by himself, according to his own sovereign will.

It is rational to suppose, that it should be beyond man's power to obtain this light by the mere strength of natural reason; for it is not a thing that belongs to reason, to see the beauty and loveliness of spiritual things; it is not a speculative thing, but depends on the sense of the heart. Reason indeed is necessary in order to it, as it is by reason only that we are become the subjects of the means of it; which means I have already shown to be necessary in order to it, though they have no proper casual influence in the affair. It is by reason that we become possessed of a notion of those doctrines that are the subject matter of this divine light, or knowledge; and reason may many ways be indirectly and remotely an advantage to it. Reason has also to do in the acts that are immediately consequent on this discovery: for seeing the truth of religion from hence, is by reason; though it be but by one step, and the inference be immediate. So reason has to do in that accepting of, and trusting in Christ, *that* is consequent on it. But if we take *reason* strictly—not for the faculty of mental perception in general, but for ratiocination, or a power of inferring by arguments—the perceiving of spiritual beauty and excellency no more belongs to reason, than it belongs to the sense of feeling to perceive colours, or to the power of seeing to perceive the sweetness of food. It is out of reason's province to perceive the beauty or loveliness of any thing: such a perception does not belong to that faculty. Reason's work is to perceive truth and not excellency. It is not ratiocination that gives men the perception of the beauty and amiableness of a countenance, though it may be many ways indirectly an advantage to it; yet it is no more reason that immediately perceives it, than it is reason that perceives the sweetness of honey: it depends on the sense of the heart—Reason may determine that a countenance is beautiful to others, it may determine that honey is sweet to others; but it will never give me a perception of its sweetness.

I will conclude with a very brief improvement of what has been said,

First, This doctrine may lead us to reflect on the goodness of God, that has so order'd it, that a saving evidence of the truth of the gospel is such, as is attainable by persons of mean capacities and advantages, as well as those that are of the greatest parts and learning. If the evidence of the gospel depended only on history, and such reasonings as learned men only are capable of, it would be above the reach of far the greatest part of mankind. But persons with an ordinary degree of knowledge are capable, without a long and subtile train of reasoning, to see the divine excellency of the things of religion: they are capable of being taught by the Spirit of God, as well as learned men. The evidence that is this way obtained, is vastly better and more satisfying, than all that can be obtained by the arguings of those that are most learned, and greatest masters of reason. And babes are as capable of knowing these things, as the wise and prudent; and they are often hid from these when they are revealed to those. 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men, after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world—"

Secondly, This doctrine may well put us upon examining ourselves, whether we have ever had this divine light let into our souls. If there be such a thing, doubtless it is of great importance whether we have thus been taught by the Spirit of God; whether the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, hath shined unto us, giving us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; whether we have seen the Son, and believed on him, or have that faith of gospel-doctrines which arises from a spiritual sight of Christ.

Thirdly, All may hence be exhorted, earnestly to seek this spiritual light. To influence and move to it, the following things may be considered.

This is the most excellent and divine wisdom that any creature is capable of. It is more excellent than any human learning; it is far more excellent than all the knowledge of the greatest philosophers or statesmen. Yea, the least glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Christ doth more exalt and ennoble the soul, than all the knowledge of those that have the greatest speculative understanding in divinity without grace. This knowledge has the most noble object

that can be, viz. the divine glory and excellency of God and Christ. The knowledge of these objects is that wherein consists the most excellent knowledge of the angels, yea, of God himself.

2. This knowledge is that which is above all others sweet and joyful. Men have a great deal of pleasure in human knowledge, in studies of natural things; but this is nothing to that joy which arises from this divine light shining into the soul. This light gives a view of those things that are immensely the most exquisitely beautiful, and capable of delighting the eye of the understanding. This spiritual light is the dawning of the light of glory in the heart. There is nothing so powerful as this to support persons in affliction, and to give the mind peace and brightness in this stormy and dark world.

3. This light is such as effectually influences the inclination, and changes the nature of the soul. It assimilates our nature to the divine nature, and changes the soul into an image of the same glory that is beheld. 2 Cor. iii. 18. "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This knowledge will wean from the world, and raise the inclination to heavenly things. It will turn the heart to God as the fountain of good, and to choose him for the only portion. This light, and this only, will bring the soul to a saving close with Christ. It conforms the heart to the gospel, mortifies its enmity and opposition against the scheme of salvation therein revealed: it causes the heart to embrace the joyful tidings, and entirely to adhere to, and acquiesce in the revelation of Christ as our Saviour: it causes the whole soul to accord and symphonise with it, admitting it with entire credit and respect, cleaving to it with full inclination and affection; and it effectually disposes the soul to give up itself entirely to Christ.

4. This light, and this only, has its fruit in an universal holiness of life. No merely notional or speculative understanding of the doctrines of religion will ever bring to this. But this light, as it reaches the bottom of the heart, and changes the nature, so it will effectually dispose to an universal obedience. It shows God as worthy to be obeyed and served. It draws forth the heart in a sincere love to God, which is the only principle of a true, gracious and universal obedience; and it convinces of the reality of those glorious rewards that God has promised to them that obey him.

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SERMON II.*

THE CHURCH'S MARRIAGE TO HER SONS, AND TO HER GOD:

ISAIAH lxii. 4, 5.

Thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

IN the midst of many blessed promises that God makes to his church—in this and the preceding and following chapters—of advancement to a state of great peace, comfort, honour, and joy, after long-continued affliction, we have the sum of all contained in these two verses. In the 4th verse God says to his church, “Thou shalt no more be termed, Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land, Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.” When it is said, “Thy land shall be married,” we are to understand “the body of thy people, thy whole race;” the land—by a metonymy, very usual in Scripture—being put for the people that inhabit the land.—The 5th verse explains how this should be accomplished in two things, viz. *in being married to her Sons, and married to her God.*

I. It is promised that she should be *married to her Sons*, or that her sons should marry her? “For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee.” Or, as the

* Preached at the instalment of the Rev. Samuel Buel, as Pastor of the church and congregation at East Hampton on Long Island, September 19, 1746.

words might have been more literally translated from the original: "As a young man is married to a virgin, so shall thy sons be married to thee." Some by this understand a promise, that the posterity of the captivated Jews should return again from Babylon to the land of Canaan, and should be, as it were, married or wedded to their own land; *i. e.* They should be re-united to their own land, and should have great comfort and joy in it, as a young man in a virgin that he marries. But when it is said, "So shall thy sons marry thee." God does not direct his speech to the land itself, but to the church whose land it was; the pronoun *thee* being applied to the same mystical person in this former part of the verse, as in the words immediately following in the latter part of the same sentence, "And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." It is the church, and not the hills and valleys of the land of Canaan, that is God's bride, or the Lamb's wife. It is also manifest, that that when God says, "So shall thy sons marry thee." he continues to speak to her to whom he had spoken in the three preceding verses; but there it is not the land of Canaan, but the church, that he speaks to when he says, "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed, Forsaken," &c. And to represent the land itself as a bride, and the subject of espousals and marriage, would be a figure of speech very unnatural, and not known in Scripture; but for the church of God to be thus represented is very usual from the beginning to the end of the Bible. And then it is manifest that the return of the Jews to the land of Canaan from the Babylonish captivity, is not the event mainly intended by the prophecy of which these words are a part. That was not the time fulfilled in the 2d verse of this chapter, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." That was not the time spoken of in the preceding chapters, with which this chapter is one continued prophecy. That was not the time spoken of in the last words of the foregoing chapter, when the Lord would cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations: Nor was it the time spoken of in the 5th, 6th, and 9th verses of that chapter, when "strangers should stand and feed the flocks of God's people, and

the sons of the alien should be their ploughmen, and vine-dressers ; but they should be named the priests of the Lord, and men should call them the ministers of God ; when they should eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory boast themselves, and their seed should be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people ; and all that should see them should acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Nor was that the time spoken of in the chapter preceding that "when the abundance of the sea should be converted unto the church ; when the isles "should wait for God, and the ships of Tarshish to bring her sons from far, and their silver and gold with them ; when the forces of the Gentiles and their kings should be brought ; when the church should suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breast of kings ; and when that nation and kingdom that would not serve her should perish and be utterly wasted : and when the sun should be no more her light by day, neither for brightness should the moon give light unto her, but the Lord should be unto her an everlasting light, and her God her glory ; and her sun should no more go down, nor her moon withdraw itself, because the Lord should be her everlasting light, and the days of her mourning should be ended." These things manifestly have respect to the Christian church in her most perfect and glorious state on earth in the last ages of the world ; when the church should be so far from being confined to the land of Canaan, that she should fill the whole earth, and all lands should be alike holy.

These words in the text, "As a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee," I chuse rather, with others, to understand as expressive of the church's union with her faithful pastors and the great benefits she should receive from them. God's ministers, though they are set to be the instructors, guides, and fathers of God's people, yet are also the sons of the church, Amos ii. 11. "I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites." Such as these, when faithful, are those precious sons of Zion comparable to fine gold spoken of Lam. iv. 2, 7. "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk." And as he that marries a young virgin becomes the guide of her youth ; so these sons of Zion are represented as taking her by the hand as her guide, Isaiah li. 18. "There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth : neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons

that she hath brought up." That by these sons of the church is meant ministers of the gospel, is confirmed by the next verse to the text, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem."

That the sons of the church should be married to her as a young man to a virgin, is a mystery not unlike many others held forth in the word of God, concerning the relation between Christ and his people, and their relation to him and to one another. Christ is David's Lord and yet his son, and both the root and offspring of David. Christ is a son born and a child given, and yet the everlasting Father. The church is Christ's mother, Cant. iii. 11. and viii. 1. and yet his spouse, his sister, and his child. Believers are Christ's mother, and yet his sister and brother. Ministers are the sons of the church, and yet are her fathers. The Apostle speaks of himself, as the father of the members of the church of Corinth, and also the mother of the Galatians, travailing in birth with them, Gal. iv. 19.

2. The second and chief fulfilment of the promise consists in the church being married to Christ: "And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Not that we are to understand that the church has many husbands, or that Christ is one husband, and ministers are other husbands strictly speaking. For though ministers are here spoken of as being married to the church, yet it is not as his competitors, or as standing in a conjugal relation to his bride in any wise parallel with his. For the church properly has but one husband; she is not an adulteress, but a virgin, who is devoted wholly to the Lamb, and who follows him whithersoever he goes. But ministers espouse the church entirely as Christ's ambassadors, as representing him and standing in his stead, being sent forth by him to be married to her in his name, that by this means she may be married to him. As when a prince marries a foreign lady by proxy, the Prince's ambassador marries her, but not in his own name, but in the name of his master, that he may be the instrument of bringing her into a true conjugal relation to him. This is agreeable to what the apostle says, 2 Cor. xi. 2. "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Here the Apostle represents himself as being, as it were, the husband of the church of Corinth; for it is the husband that is jealous when the wife commits adultery; and yet he speaks of himself as having espoused them, not in his

own name, but in that name of Christ, and for him, and him only, and as his ambassador, sent forth to bring them home a chaste virgin to him. Ministers are in the text represented as married to the church in the same sense that elsewhere they are represented as fathers of the church. The church has but one father, even God, and ministers are fathers as his ambassadors; so the church has but one shepherd, John x. 16. "There shall be one fold and one shepherd;" but yet ministers, as Christ's ambassadors, are often called the church's shepherds or pastors. The church has but one Saviour; but yet ministers, as his ambassadors and instruments, are called her saviours; 1 Tim. iv. 16. "In doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Obad. 21. "And saviours shall come upon Mount Zion." The church has but one Priest; but yet in Isaiah lxvi. 21. speaking of the ministers of the Gentile nations, it is said, "I will take of them for priests and Levites." The church has but one Judge, for the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son; yet Christ tells his Apostles, that they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

When the text speaks first of ministers marrying the church, and then of Christ's rejoicing over her as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride; the former is manifestly spoken of as being in order to the latter; even in order to the joy and happiness that the church shall have in her true bridegroom. The preaching of the gospel is in this context spoken of three times successively, as the great means of bringing about the prosperity and joy of the church; once, in the first verse, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth;" and then in the text; and lastly in the two following verses, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

The text thus opened affords these two propositions proper for our consideration on the solemn occasion of this day.

I. The uniting of faithful ministers with Christ's people in the ministerial office, when done in a due manner, is like a young man's marrying a virgin.

II. This union of ministers with the people of Christ is in order to their being brought to the blessedness of a more glorious union, in which Christ shall rejoice over them, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride.

I. PROP. The uniting of a faithful minister with Christ's people in the ministerial office, when done in a due manner, is like a young man's marrying a virgin.

I say, the uniting of a faithful minister with Christ's people, and in a due manner: For we must suppose that the promise God makes to the church in the text, relates to such ministers, and such a manner of union with the church; because this is promised to the church as a part of her latter day glory, and as a benefit that should be granted her by God, as the fruit of his great love to her, and an instance of her great spiritual prosperity and happiness in her purest and most excellent state on earth. But it would be no such instance of God's great favour and the church's happiness, to have unfaithful ministers entering into office in an undue and improper manner. They are evidently faithful ministers that are spoken of in the next verse, where the same are doubtless spoken of as in the text; "I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night." And they are those that shall be introduced into the ministry at a time of its extraordinary purity, order, and beauty, wherein (as is said in the first, second, and third verses) her "righteousness should go forth as brightness, and the Gentiles should see her righteousness, and all kings her glory, and she should be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God."

When I speak of the uniting of a faithful minister with Christ's people in a due manner, I do not mean a due manner only with regard to external order; but its being truly done in a holy manner, with sincere upright aims and intentions, with a right disposition, and proper frames of mind in those that are concerned; and particularly in the minister that takes office, and God's people to whom he is united, each exercising in this affair a proper regard to God and one another.—Such an uniting of a faithful minister with the people of God in the ministerial office, is in some respects like a young man marrying a virgin.

1. When a duly qualified person is properly invested with the ministerial character, and does in a due manner take upon him the sacred work and office of a minister of the gospel,

he does, in some sense, espouse the church of Christ in general. For though he do not properly stand in a pastoral relation to the whole church of Christ through the earth, and is far from becoming an universal pastor; yet thenceforward he has a different concern with the church of Christ in general, and its interests and welfare, than other persons have that are laymen, and should be regarded otherwise by all the members of the Christian church. Where-ever he is providentially called to preach the word of God, or minister in holy things, he ought to be received as a minister of Christ, and the messenger of the Lord of Hosts to them. And every one that takes on him this office as he ought to do, espouses the church of Christ, as he espouses the interest of the church in a manner that is peculiar. He is under obligations, as a minister of the Christian church, beyond other men, to love the church, as Christ her true bridegroom hath loved her, and to prefer Jerusalem above his chief joy, and to imitate Christ, the great shepherd and bishop of souls and husband of the church, in his care and tender concern for her welfare, and earnest and constant labours to promote it, as he has opportunity. And as he, in taking office, devotes himself to the service of Christ in his church; so he gives himself to the church, to be hers, in that love, tender care, constant endeavour, and earnest labour for her provision, comfort, and welfare, that is proper to his office, as a minister of Providence, as long as he lives; as a young man gives himself to a virgin when he marries her. And the church of Christ in general, as constituted of true saints through the world, (though they do not deliver up themselves to any one particular minister, as universal pastor, yet) cleave to and embrace the ministry of the church with endeared affection, high honour, and esteem, for Christ's sake. They joyfully commit and subject themselves to them; they resolve to honour and help them, to be guided by them and obey them so long as in the world; as the bride doth in marriage deliver up herself to her husband. And the ministry in general, or the whole number of faithful ministers, being all united in the same work as fellow labourers and conspiring to the same design as fellow helpers to the grace of God, may be considered as one mystical person, that espouses the church as a young man espouses a virgin: as the many elders of the church of Ephesus are represented as one mystical person, Rev. ii. 1. and all called the angel of the church of Ephesus: and as the faithful ministers of Christ in general, all over the world, seem to be represented as one

mystical person, and called an angel, Rev. xiv. 6. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue, and people."
—But,

2. More especially is the uniting of a faithful minister with a particular Christian people, as their pastor, when done in a due manner, like a young man marrying a virgin.—It is so with respect to the union itself, the concomitants of the union, and the fruits of it.

(1.) The *union itself* is in several respects like that which is between a young man and a virgin whom he marries.

It is so with respect to mutual regard and affection. A faithful minister, that is in a Christian manner united to a Christian people as their pastor, has his heart united to them in the most ardent and tender affection. And they, on the other hand, have their hearts united to him, esteeming him very highly in love for his works sake, and receiving him with honour and reverence, and willingly subjecting themselves to him, and committing themselves to his care, as being under Christ, their head and guide.

And such a pastor and people are like a young man and virgin united in marriage, with respect to the purity of their regard one to another. The young man gives himself to his bride in purity, as undebauched by meretricious embraces; and she also presents herself to him a chaste virgin. So in such an union of a minister and people as we are speaking of, the parties united are pure and holy in their affection and regard one to another. The minister's heart is united to the people, not for filthy lucre, or any worldly advantage, but with a pure benevolence to them, and desire of their spiritual welfare and prosperity, and complacence in them as the children of God and followers of Christ Jesus. And, on the other hand, they love and honour him with an holy affection and esteem; and not merely as having their admiration raised, and their carnal affection moved by having their curiosity, and other fleshly principles gratified by a florid eloquence, and the excellency of speech and man's wisdom; but receiving him as the messenger of the Lord of Hosts, coming to them on a divine and infinitely important errand, and with those holy qualifications that resemble the virtues of the Lamb of God.

And as the bridegroom and bride give themselves to each other in covenant; so it is in that union we are speaking of

between a faithful pastor and a Christian people. The minister, by solemn vows, devotes himself to the people, to improve his time and strength, and spend and be spent for them so long as God in his Providence shall continue the union: And they, on the other hand, in a holy covenant commit the care of their souls, and subject themselves to him.

(2.) The union between a faithful minister and a Christian people, is like that between a young man and virgin in their marriage, with respect to the *concomitants* of it.

When such a minister and such a people are thus united, it is attended with great joy. The minister joyfully devoting himself to the service of his Lord in the work of the ministry, as a work that he delights in: and also joyfully uniting himself to the society of the saints that he is set over, as having complacence in them, for his dear Lord's sake, whose people they are; and willingly and joyfully, on Christ's call, undertaking the labours and difficulties of the service of their souls. And they, on the other hand; joyfully receiving him as a precious gift of their ascended Redeemer. Thus a faithful minister and a Christian people are each others joy, Rom. xv. 32. "That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed." 2 Cor. i. 14. "As you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye are ours."

Another concomitant of this union, wherein it resembles that which becomes a young man and virgin united in marriage, is mutual helpfulness, and a constant care and endeavour to promote each other's good and comfort. The minister earnestly and continually seeks the profit and comfort of the souls of his people, and to guard and defend them from every thing that might annoy them, and studies and labours to promote their spiritual peace and prosperity. They, on the other hand, make it their constant care to promote his comfort, to make the burden of his difficult work easy, to avoid those things that might add to the difficulty of it, and that might justly be grievous to his heart. They do what in them lies to encourage his heart, and strengthen his hands in his work; and are ready to say to him, when called to exert himself in the more difficult parts of his work, as the people of old to Ezra the priest, when they saw him bowed down under the burden of a difficult affair, Ezra x. 4. "Arise, for this matter belongeth to thee: we also will be with thee: Be of good courage, and do it." They spare no pains nor cost to make their pastor's outward circumstances easy and comfort-

able, and free from pinching necessities and distracting cares, and to put him under the best advantages to follow his great work fully and successfully.

Such a pastor and people, as it is between a couple happily united in a conjugal relation, have a mutual sympathy with each other, a fellow-feeling of each others burdens and calamities, and a communion in each others prosperity and joy. When the people suffer in their spiritual interests, the pastor suffers: he is afflicted when he sees their souls in trouble and darkness: he feels their wounds; and he looks on their prosperity and comfort as his own. 2 Cor. xi. 29. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?" 2 Cor. vii. 13. "We were comforted in your comfort." And, on the other hand, the people feel their pastor's burdens, and rejoice in his prosperity and consolations; see Phil. iv. 14. and 2 Cor. ii. 3.

(3.) This union is like that which is between a young man and a virgin in its *fruits*.

One fruit of it is mutual benefit: They become meet helps one for another. The people receive great benefit by the minister, as he is their teacher to communicate spiritual instructions and counsels to them, and is set to watch over them to defend them from those enemies and calamities they are liable to; and so is, under Christ, to be both their guide and guard, as the husband is of the wife. And as the husband provides the wife with food and cloathing; so the pastor, as Christ's steward, makes provision for his people, and brings forth out of his treasure things new and old, gives every one his portion of meat in due season, and is made the instrument of spiritually clothing and adorning their souls. And, on the other hand, the minister receives benefit from the people, as they minister greatly to his spiritual good by that holy converse to which their union to him as his flock leads them. The conjugal relation leads the persons united therein to the most intimate acquaintance and conversation with each other; so the union there is between a faithful pastor and a Christian people, leads them to intimate conversation about things of a spiritual nature. It leads the people most freely and fully to open the case of their souls to the pastor, and leads him to deal most freely, closely, and thoroughly with them in things pertaining thereto. And this conversation not only tends to *their* benefit, but also greatly to *his*. And the pastor receives benefit from the people outwardly, as they take care of and order his outward accommodations for his

support and comfort, and do as it were spread and serve his table for him.

Another fruit of this union, wherein it resembles the conjugal, is a spiritual offspring. There is wont to arise from the union of such a pastor and people a spiritual race of children. These new-born children of God are in the Scripture represented both as the children of ministers, as those who have begotten them through the gospel, and also as the children of the church, who is represented as their mother that hath brought them forth, and at whose breasts they are nourished; as in Isa. liv. 1. and lxvi. 11. Gal. iv. 26. 1 Pet. ii. 2. and many other places.

Having thus briefly shewn how the uniting of faithful ministers with Christ's people in the ministerial office, when done in a due manner, is like a young man marrying a virgin, I proceed now to the

II. PROP. viz. That this union of ministers with the people of Christ, is in order to their being brought to the blessedness of a more glorious union, in which Christ shall rejoice over them as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride.

1. The saints are, and shall be the subjects of this blessedness. Of all the various kinds of union of sensible and temporal things that are used in Scripture to represent the relation there is between Christ and his church; that which is between bridegroom and bride, or husband and wife, is much the most frequently made use of both in the Old and New Testament. The Holy Ghost seems to take a peculiar delight in this, as a similitude fit to represent the strict, intimate, and blessed union that is between Christ and his saints. The Apostle intimates, that one end why God appointed marriage, and established so near a relation as that between husband and wife, was, that it might be a type of the union that is between Christ and his church; in Eph. v. 30, 31, 32. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh."—*For this cause*, i. e. because we are members of Christ's body, of his flesh and of his bones, God appointed that man and wife should be so joined together as to be one flesh, to represent this high and blessed union between Christ and his church. The Apostle explains himself in the next words, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

This institution of marriage, making the man and his wife one flesh, is a great mystery; i. e. there is a great and glorious mystery hid in the design of it: and the Apostle tells us what that glorious mystery is, "I speak concerning Christ and the church:" as much as to say, the mystery I speak of, is that blessed union that is between Christ and his church, which I spoke of before.

This is a blessed union indeed; of which that between a faithful minister and a Christian people is but a shadow. Ministers are not the proper husbands of the church, though their union to God's people, as Christ's ambassadors, in several respects resembles the conjugal relation: but Christ is the true husband of the church, to whom the souls of the saints are espoused indeed, and to whom they are united as his flesh and his bones, yea and one spirit; to whom they have given themselves in an everlasting covenant, and whom alone they cleave to, love, honour, obey and trust in, as their spiritual husband, whom alone they reserve themselves for as chaste virgins, and whom they follow whithersoever he goeth. There are many ministers in the church of Christ, and there may be several pastors of one particular church: but the church has but one husband, all others are rejected and despised in comparison of him; he is among the sons as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood; they all are barren and worthless, he only is the fruitful tree; and therefore, leaving all others, the church betakes herself to him alone, and sits under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to her taste; she takes up her full and entire rest in him, desiring no other.—The relation between a minister and people shall be dissolved, and may be dissolved before death: but the union between Christ and his church shall never be dissolved, neither before death nor by death, but shall endure through all eternity: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but Christ's conjugal love and kindness shall not depart from his church; neither shall the covenant of his peace, the marriage-covenant, be removed," Isa. liv. 1.—The union between a faithful minister and a Christian people is but a partial resemblance even of the marriage union, it is like marriage only in some particulars: but with respect to the union between Christ and his church, marriage is but a partial resemblance, yea, a faint shadow. Every thing desirable and excellent in the union between an earthly bridegroom and bride, is to be found in the union between Christ and his church; and that in an infinitely greater perfection and more glorious manner.—

There is infinitely more to be found in it than ever was found between the happiest couple in a conjugal relation; or could be found if the bride and bridegroom had not only the innocence of Adam and Eve, but the perfection of angels.

Christ and his saints, standing in such a relation as this one to another, the saints must needs be unspeakably happy. Their mutual joy in each other is answerable to the nearness of their relation and strictness of their union. Christ rejoices over the church as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, and she rejoices in him as the bride rejoices in the bridegroom. My text has respect to the mutual joy that Christ and his church should have in each other: For though the joy of Christ over his church only is mentioned, yet it is evident that this is here spoken of and promised as the great happiness of the church, and therefore supposes her joy in him.

The mutual joy of Christ and his church is like that of bridegroom and bride, in that they rejoice in each other, as those whom they have chosen above others, for their nearest, most intimate, and everlasting friends and companions. The church is Christ's chosen, Isaiah xli. 9. "I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away:" chap. xlvi. 10. "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." How often are God's saints called his elect or chosen ones? He has chosen them, not to be mere servants, but friends; John xv. 15. "I call you not servants;—but I have called you friends." And though Christ be the Lord of glory, infinitely above men and angels, yet he has chosen the elect to be his companions; and has taken upon him their nature; and so in some respect, as it were, levelled himself with them, that he might be their brother and companion. Christ as well as David, calls the saints his brethren and companions, Psalm cxxii. 8. "For my brethren and companions sake I will now say, Peace be within thee." So in the book of Canticles, he calls his church his sister and spouse. Christ hath loved and chosen his church as his peculiar friend, above others; Psalm cxxxv. 4. "The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure." As the bridegroom chuses the bride for his peculiar friend, above all others in the world; so Christ has chosen his church for a peculiar nearness to him, as his flesh and his bone, and the high honour and dignity of espousals above all others, rather than the fallen angels, yea, rather than the elect angels. For verily, in this respect, "he taketh

not hold of angels, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham ;" as the words are in the original, Heb. ii. 16. He has chosen his church above the rest of mankind, above all the Heathen nations, and those that are without the visible church, and above all other professing Christians, Cant. vi. 9. " My dove, my undefiled is but one ; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her." Thus Christ rejoices over his church, as obtained in her that which he has chosen above all the rest of the creation, and as sweetly resting in his choice ; Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14. " The Lord hath chosen Zion : He hath desired it.—This is my rest for ever."

On the other hand, the church chuses Christ above all others : he is in her eyes the chief among ten thousands, fairer than the sons of men : she rejects the suit of all his rivals, for his sake : her heart relinquishes the whole world : he is her pearl of great price, for which she parts with all ; and rejoices in him, as the choice and rest of her soul.

Christ and his church, like the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in each other, as having a special propriety in each other. All things are Christ's ; but he has a special propriety in his church. There is nothing in heaven or earth, among all the creatures, that is his, in that high and excellent manner that the church is his : They are often called his portion and inheritance ; they are said, Rev. xiv. 4. to be " the first fruits to God and the Lamb." As of old, the first fruit was that part of the harvest that belonged to God, and was to be offered to him ; so the saints are the first fruits of God's creatures, being that part which is in a peculiar manner Christ's portion, above all the rest of the creation, James i. 18. " Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." And Christ rejoices in his church, as in that which is peculiarly his, Isaiah lxxv. 19. " I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people." The church has also a peculiar propriety in Christ : though other things are hers, yet nothing is hers in that manner that her spiritual bridegroom is hers. Great and glorious as he is, yet he, with all his dignity and glory, is wholly given to her, to be fully possessed and enjoyed by her, to the utmost degree that she is capable of : therefore we have her so often saying in the language of exultation and triumph, " My beloved is mine, and I am his." Cant. ii. 16. and vi. 3. and vii. 10.

Christ and his church, like the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in each other, as those that are the objects of each

others most tender and ardent love. The love of Christ to his church is altogether unparalleled: the height and depth and length and breadth of it pass knowledge: for he loved the church, and gave himself for it; and his love to her proved stronger than death. And on the other hand, she loves him with a supreme affection; nothing stands in competition with him in her heart: she loves him with all her heart. Her whole soul is offered up to him in the flame of love. And Christ rejoices, and has sweet rest and delight in his love to the church; Zeph. iii. 17. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save: he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing." So the church, in the exercises of her love to Christ, rejoices with unspeakable joy; 1 Pet. i. 7, 8. "Jesus Christ: whom, having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

Christ and his church rejoice in each others beauty. The church rejoices in Christ's divine beauty and glory. She, as it were, sweetly solaces herself in the light of the glory of the sun of righteousness; and the saints say one to another, as in Isa. ii. 5. "O house of Jacob, come ye, let us walk in the light of the Lord." The perfections and virtues of Christ are as a perfumed ointment to the church, that make his very name to be to her as ointment poured forth; Cant. i. 3. "Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee." And Christ delights and rejoices in the beauty of the church, the beauty which he hath put upon her: her Christian graces are ornaments of great price in his sight, 1 Pet. iii. 4. And he is spoken of as greatly desiring her beauty, Psalm xlv. 11. Yea he himself speaks of his heart as ravished with her beauty, Cant. iv. 9. "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck."

Christ and his church, as the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in each others love. Wine is spoken of, Psalm civ. 15. as that which maketh glad man's heart: but the church of Christ is spoken of as rejoicing in the love of Christ, as that which is more pleasant and refreshing than wine, Cant. i. 4. "The king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." So on the other hand, Christ speaks of the church's love as far better to him than wine, Cant. iv. 10.

“How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine!”

Christ and his church rejoice in communion with each other, as in being united in their happiness, and having fellowship and a joint participation in each others good: as the bridegroom and bride rejoice together at the wedding-feast, and as thenceforward they are joint partakers of each others comforts and joys: Rev. iii. 20. “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.” The church has fellowship with Christ in his own happiness, and his divine entertainments; his joy is fulfilled in her, John xv. 11. and xvii. 13. She sees light in his light; and she is made to drink at the river of his own pleasures, Psalm xxxvi. 8, 9. And Christ brings her to eat and drink at his own table, to take her fill of his own entertainments; Cant. v. 1. “Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” And he, on the other hand, has fellowship with her; he feasts with her; her joys are his; and he rejoices in that entertainment that she provides for him. So Christ is said to feed among the lilies, Cant. ii. 16. and chap. vii. 13. she speaks of all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which she had laid up, and says to him, chap. iv. 16. “Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits:” and he makes answer in the next verse, “I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk.”

And lastly, Christ and his church, as the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in conversing with each other. The words of Christ by which he converses with his church, are most sweet to her; and therefore she says of him, Cant. v. 16. “His mouth his most sweet.” And on the other hand, he says of her, chapter ii. 14. “Let me hear thy voice: for sweet is thy voice.” And chapter iv. 11. “Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue.”

Christ rejoices over his saints as the bridegroom over the bride at all times: but there are some seasons wherein he doth so more especially. Such a season is the time of the soul’s conversion; when the good shepherd finds his lost sheep, then he brings it home rejoicing, and calls together his friends and neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me. The day of a sinner’s conversion is the day of Christ’s espousals;

and so is eminently the day of his rejoicing; Sol. Song, iii. 11. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." And it is oftentimes remarkably the day of the saints' rejoicing in Christ: for then God turns again the captivity of his elect people, and as it were, fills their mouth with laughter, and their tongue with singing; as in Psalm cxxvi. at the beginning. We read of the jailor, that when he was converted, "he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house," Acts xvi. 34.—There are other seasons of special communion of the saints with Christ, wherein Christ doth in an especial manner rejoice over his saints, and as their bridegroom brings them into his chambers, that they also may be glad and rejoice in him, Cant. i. 4.

But this mutual rejoicing of Christ and his saints will be in its perfection, at the time of the saints' glorification with Christ in heaven; for that is the proper time of the saints entering in with the bridegroom into the marriage, Matth. xxv. 10. The saint's conversion is rather like the betrothing of the intended bride to her bridegroom before they come together; but at the time of the saint's glorification that shall be fulfilled in Psalm xlv. 15. "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the king's palace." That is the time when those whom Christ loved, and for whom he gave himself—that he might sanctify and cleanse them, as with the washing of water by the word—shall be presented to him in glory, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Then the church shall be brought to the full enjoyment of her bridegroom, having all tears wiped away from her eyes; and there shall be no more distance or absence. She shall then be brought to the entertainments of an eternal wedding-feast, and to dwell for ever with her bridegroom; yea, to dwell eternally in his embraces. Then Christ will give her his loves; and she shall drink her fill, yea, she shall swim in the ocean of his love.

And as there are various seasons wherein Christ and particular saints do more especially rejoice in each other; so there are also certain seasons wherein Christ doth more especially rejoice over his church collectively taken. Such a season is a time of remarkable out-pouring of the Spirit of God: it is a time of the espousals of many souls to Christ; and so of the joy of espousals. It is a time wherein Christ is wont more especially to visit his saints with his loving-kindness,

and to bring them near to himself, and especially to refresh their hearts with divine communications : on which account, it becomes a time of great joy to the church of Christ. So when the spirit of God was so wonderfully poured out on the city of Samaria, with the preaching of Philip, we read that "there was great joy in that city," Acts viii. 8. And the time of that wonderful effusion of the spirit at Jerusalem, begun at the feast of Pentecost, was a time of holy feasting and rejoicing, and a kind of a wedding-day to the church of Christ ; wherein "they continuing daily, with one accord, in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart," Acts ii. 46.

But more especially is the time of that great out-pouring of the Spirit of God in the latter days, so often foretold in the Scriptures, represented as the marriage of the Lamb, and the rejoicing of Christ and his church in each other, as the bridegroom and the bride. This is the time prophesied of in our text and context ; and foretold in Is. lxxv. 19. "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people ; and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying." This is the time spoken of Rev. xix. 6, 7, 8, 9. where the Apostle John tells us, He "heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." And adds, "To her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

But above all, the time of Christ's last coming, is that of the consummation of the church's marriage with the Lamb, and of the complete and most perfect joy of the wedding. In that resurrection-morning, when the Sun of righteousness shall appear in our heavens, shining in all his brightness and glory, he will come forth as a bridegroom ; he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels. And at that glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, shall the whole elect church, complete as to every individual member, and each member with the whole man, both body and soul, and both in perfect glory, ascend up

to meet the Lord in the air, to be thenceforth for ever with the Lord. That will be indeed a joyful meeting of this glorious bridegroom and bride. Then the bridegroom will appear in all his glory without any veil: and then the saints shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and at the right hand of their Redeemer; and then the church will appear as the bride, the Lamb's wife. It is the state of the church after the resurrection, that is spoken of Rev. xxi. 2. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." And ver. 9. "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Then will come the time, when Christ will sweetly invite his spouse to enter in with him into the palace of his glory, which he had been preparing for her from the foundation of the world, and shall, as it were, take her by the hand, and lead her in with him: and this glorious bridegroom and bride shall, with all their shining ornaments, ascend up together into the heaven of heavens; the whole multitude of glorious angels waiting upon them: and this son and daughter of God shall, in their united glory and joy, present themselves together before the Father; when Christ shall say, "Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me." And they both shall in that relation and union, together receive the Father's blessing; and shall thenceforward rejoice together, in consummate, uninterrupted, immutable, and everlasting glory, in the love and embraces of each other, and joint enjoyment of the love of the Father.

2. That forementioned union of faithful ministers with the people of Christ, is in order to this blessedness.

1. It is only with reference to Christ, as the true bridegroom of his church, that there is any union between a faithful minister and a Christian people, that is like that of a bridegroom and bride.

As I observed before, a faithful minister espouses a Christian people, not in his own name, but as Christ's ambassador: he espouses them, that therein they may be espoused to Christ. He loves her with a tender conjugal affection, as she is the spouse of Christ, and as he, as the minister of Christ, has his heart under the influence of the spirit of Christ; as Abraham's faithful servant, that was sent to fetch a wife for his master's son, was captivated with Rebekah's beauty and virtue; but not with reference to an union with himself, but with his master Isaac. It was for his sake he loved her, and

it was for him that he desired her. He set his heart upon her, that she might be Isaac's wife; and it was for this that he greatly rejoiced over her, for this he wooed her, and for this he obtained her, and she was for a season, in a sense united to him; but it was as a fellow-traveller, that by him she might be brought to Isaac in the land of Canaan. For this he adorned her with ornaments of gold; it was to prepare her for Isaac's embraces. All that tender care which a faithful minister takes of his people as a kind of spiritual husband—to provide for them, to lead, and feed, and comfort them—is not as to his own bride, but his master's.

And on the other hand, the people receive him, unite themselves to him in covenant, honour him, subject themselves to him, and obey him, only for Christ's sake, and as one that represents him, and acts in his name towards them. All this love, and honour, and submission, is ultimately referred to Christ. Thus the Apostle says, Gal. iv. 14. "Ye received me as an angel, or messenger of God, even as Christ Jesus." And the children that are brought forth in consequence of the union of the pastor and people, are not properly the minister's children, but the children of Christ; they are not born of man, but of God.

2. The things that appertain to that fore-mentioned union of a faithful minister and Christian people, are the principal appointed means of bringing the church to that blessedness that has been spoken of. Abraham's servant, and the part he acted as Isaac's agent towards Rebekah, were the principal means of his being brought to enjoy the benefits of her conjugal relation to Isaac. Ministers are sent to wooe the souls of men for Christ, 2 Cor. v. 20. "We are then ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." We read in Matt. xxii. of a certain king, that made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to invite and bring in the guests: these servants are ministers. The labours of faithful ministers are the principal means God is wont to make use of for the conversion of the children of the church, and so of their espousals unto Christ. I have espoused you to one husband, says the Apostle, 2 Cor. xi. 2. The preaching of the gospel by faithful ministers, is the principal means that God uses for exhibiting Christ, his love and benefits to his elect people, and the chief means of their being sanctified, and so fitted to enjoy their spiritual bridegroom. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it,

as by the washing of water by the word, (i. e. by the preaching of the gospel), and so might present it to himself, a glorious church. The labours of faithful ministers are ordinarily the principal means of the joy of the saints in Christ Jesus, in their fellowship with their spiritual bridegroom in this world; 2 Cor. i. 24. "We are helpers of your joy." They are God's instruments for bringing up the church, as it were, from her childhood, till she is fit for her marriage with the Lord of glory; as Mordecai brought up Hadassah, or Esther, whereby she was fitted to be queen in Ahasuerus's court. God purifies the church under their hand, as Esther, (to fit her for her marriage with the king,) was committed to the custody of Hegai the keeper of the women, to be purified six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours. They are made the instruments of clothing the church in her wedding-garments, that fine linen, clean and white, and adorning her for her husband; as Abraham's servant adorned Rebekah with golden ear-rings and bracelets. Faithful ministers are made the instruments of leading the people of God in the way to heaven, conducting them to the glorious presence of the bridegroom, to the consummate joys of her marriage with the Lamb; as Abraham's servant conducted Rebekah from Padan-aram to Canaan, and presented her to Isaac, and delivered her into his embraces. For it is the office of ministers, not only to espouse the church to her husband, but to present her a chaste virgin to Christ.

I would now conclude this discourse with some exhortations, agreeable to what has been said. And,

1. The exhortation may be to all that are called to the work of the gospel ministry.—Let us who are honoured by the glorious bridegroom of the church, to be employed as his ministers, to so high a purpose, as has been represented, be engaged and induced by what has been observed, to faithfulness in our great work; that we may be, and act towards Christ's people that are committed to our care, as those that are united to them in holy espousals, for Christ's sake, and in order to their being brought to the unspeakable blessedness of that more glorious union with the Lamb of God, in which he shall rejoice over them, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride. Let us see to it that our hearts are united to them, as a young man to a virgin that he marries, in the most ardent and tender affection; and that our regard to them be pure and uncorrupt, that it may be a regard to them, and not to

what they have, or any worldly advantages we hope to gain of them. And let us behave ourselves as those that are devoted to their good : being willing to spend and be spent for them ; joyfully undertaking and enduring the labour and self-denial that is requisite in order to a thorough fulfilling the ministry that we have received. Let us continually and earnestly endeavour to promote the prosperity and salvation of the souls committed to our care, looking on their calamities and their prosperity as our own ; feeling their spiritual wounds and griefs, and refreshed with their consolations ; and spending our whole lives in diligent care and endeavour to provide for, nourish, and instruct our people, as the intended spouse of Christ, yet in her minority, that we may form her mind and behaviour, and bring her up for him, and that we may cleanse her, as with the washing of water by the word, and purify her as with sweet odours, and clothed in such raiment as may become Christ's bride. Let us aim that when the appointed wedding-day comes, we may have done our work as Christ's messengers ; and may then be ready to present Christ's spouse to him, a chaste virgin, properly educated and formed, and suitably adorned for her marriage with the Lamb ; that he may then present her to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and may receive her into his eternal embraces, in perfect purity, beauty, and glory.

Here I would mention three or four things tending to excite us to this fidelity.

1. We ought to consider how much Christ has done to obtain that joy, wherein he rejoices over his church, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride.

The creation of the world seems to have been especially for this end, that the eternal Son of God might obtain a spouse towards whom he might fully exercise the infinite benevolence of his nature, and to whom he might, as it were, open and pour forth all that immense fountain of condescension, love, and grace that was in his heart, and that in this way God might be glorified. Doubtless the work of creation is subordinate to the work of redemption : the creation of the new heavens and new earth, is represented as so much more excellent than the old, that, in comparison, it is not worthy to be mentioned, or come into mind.

Christ has done greater things than to create the world, in order to obtain his bride and the joy of his espousals with her : For he became man for this end ; which was a greater

thing than his creating the world. For the Creator to *make* the creature was a great thing; but for him to *become* a creature was a greater thing. And he did a much greater thing still to obtain this joy; in that for this he laid down his life, and suffered even the death of the cross: for this he poured out his soul unto death; and he that is the Lord of the universe, God over all blessed for evermore, offered up himself a sacrifice, in both body and soul, in the flames of divine wrath. Christ obtains his elect spouse by conquest: for she was a captive in the hands of dreadful enemies; and her Redeemer came into the world to conquer these enemies, and rescue her out of their hands, that she might be his bride. And he came and encountered these enemies in the greatest battle that ever was beheld by men or angels: He fought with principalities and powers; he fought alone with the powers of darkness, and all the armies of hell; yea he conflicted with the infinitely more dreadful wrath of God, and overcame in this great battle; and thus he obtained his spouse. Let us consider at how great a price Christ purchased this spouse: He did not redeem her with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his own precious blood; yea he gave himself for her. When he offered up himself to God in those extreme labours and sufferings, this was the joy that was set before him, that made him cheerfully to endure the cross, and despise the pain and shame in comparison of this joy; even that rejoicing over his church, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride that the Father had promised him, and that he expected when he should present her to himself in perfect beauty and blessedness.

The prospect of this was what supported him in the midst of the dismal prospect of his sufferings, at which his soul was troubled; John xii. 27. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: But for this cause came I unto this hour." These words shew the conflict and distress of Christ's holy soul in the view of his approaching sufferings. But in the midst of his trouble, he was refreshed with the joyful prospect of the success of those sufferings, in bringing home his elect church to himself, signified by a voice from heaven, and promised by the Father: on which he says, in the language of triumph, ver. 31, 32. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

And ministers of the gospel are appointed to be the

instruments of bringing this to pass; the instruments of bringing home his elect spouse to him, and her becoming his bride; and the instruments of her sanctifying and cleansing by the word, that she might be meet to be presented to him on the future glorious wedding-day. How great a motive then is here to induce us who are called to be these instruments, to be faithful in our work, and most willingly labour and suffer, that Christ may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied? Shall Christ do such great things, and go through such great labours and sufferings to obtain this joy, and then honour us sinful worms, so as to employ us as his ministers and instruments to bring this joy to pass; and shall we be loth to labour, and backward to deny ourselves for this end?

2. Let us consider how much the manner in which Christ employs us in this great business has to engage us to a faithful performance of it. We are sent forth as his servants; but it is as highly dignified servants, as stewards of his household, as Abraham's servant; and as his ambassadors, to stand in his stead, and in his name, and represent his person in so great an affair as that of his espousals with the eternally beloved of his soul. Christ employs us not as mere servants, but as friends of the bridegroom; agreeable to the style in which John the Baptist speaks of himself, John iii. 29. ; in which he probably alludes to an ancient custom among the Jews at their nuptial solemnities, at which one of the guests that was most honoured and next in dignity to the bridegroom, was styled *the friend of the bridegroom*.

There is not an angel in heaven, of how high an order soever, but what looks on himself honoured by the Son of God and Lord of glory, in being employed by him as his minister in the high affair of his espousals with his blessed bride. But such honour has Christ put upon us, that his spouse should in some sort be ours; that we should marry, as a young man marries a virgin, the same mystical person that he himself will rejoice over as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride; that we should be his ministers to treat and transact for him with his dear spouse, that he might obtain this joy: and, in our treaty with her, to be married to her in his name, and sustain an image of his own endearing relation to her; and that she should receive us, in some sort, as himself, and her heart be united to us in esteem, honour, and affection, as those that represent him; and that Christ's and the church's children should be ours, and that the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul should be also the fruit of the travail of our souls; as the

Apostle speaks of himself as travailing in birth with his hearers, Gal. iv. 19. The reason why Christ puts such honour on faithful ministers, even above the angels themselves, is because they are of his beloved church, they are select members of his dear spouse, and Christ esteems nothing too much, no honour too great for her. Therefore Jesus Christ, the King of angels and men, does as it were cause it to be proclaimed concerning faithful ministers, as Ahasuerus did concerning him that brought up Esther, his beloved queen; "Thus shall it be done to the man that the king delights to honour."

And seeing Christ hath so honoured us, that our relation to his people resembles his, surely our affection to them should imitate his, in seeking their salvation, spiritual peace, and happiness. Our tender care, labours, self-denial, and readiness to suffer for their happiness, should imitate what hath appeared in him, who hath purchased them with his own blood.

3. Let it be considered, that if we faithfully acquit ourselves in our office, in the manner that hath been represented, we shall surely hereafter be partakers of the joy, when the bridegroom and bride shall rejoice in each other in perfect and eternal glory.

God once gave forth a particular command, with special solemnity, that it should be written for the notice of all professing Christians through all ages, that they are happy and blessed indeed, who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb; Rev. xix. 9. "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." But if we are faithful in our work, we shall surely be the subjects of that blessedness; we shall be partakers of the joy of the bridegroom and bride, not merely as friends and neighbours that are invited to be occasional guests, but as members of the one and the other. We shall be partakers with the church, the blessed bride, in her joy in the bridegroom, not only as friends and ministers to the church, but as members of principal dignity; as the eye, the ear, the hand, are principal members of the body. Faithful ministers in the church will hereafter be a part of the church that shall receive distinguished glory at the resurrection of the just, which, above all other times, may be looked on as the church's wedding-day; Dan. xii. 2, 3. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life. And

they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." They are elders who are represented as that part of the church triumphant that sit next to the throne of God, Rev. iv. 4. "And round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

And we shall also be partakers of the joy of the bridegroom in his rejoicing over his bride. We, as the special friends of the bridegroom, shall stand by, and hear him express his joy on that day, and rejoice greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; as John the baptist said of himself, John iii. 29. "He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." Christ in reward for our faithful service, in winning and espousing his bride to him, and bringing her up from her minority, and adorning her for him, will then call us to partake with him in the joy of his marriage. And she that will then be his joy, shall also be our crown of rejoicing; 1 Thess. ii. 19. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" What a joyful meeting had Christ and his disciples together, when the disciples returned to their Master, after the faithful and successful performance of their appointed service, when Christ sent them forth to preach the gospel; Luke x. 17. "And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." Here we see how they rejoice: The next words shew how Christ also rejoiced on that occasion: "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." And in the next verse but two, we are told, that "in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." So if we faithfully acquit ourselves, we shall another day return to him with joy; and we shall rejoice with him and he with us.—Then will be the day when Christ, who hath sown in tears and in blood, and we who have reaped the fruits of his labours and sufferings, shall rejoice together, agreeable to John, iv. 35.—37. And that will be a happy meeting indeed, when Christ and his lovely and blessed bride, and faithful ministers who have been the instruments of wooing and winning her heart to

him, and adorning her for him, and presenting her to him, shall all rejoice together.

4. Further to stir us up to faithfulness in the great business that is appointed us, in order to the mutual joy of this bridegroom and bride, let us consider what reason we have to hope that the time is approaching when this joy shall be to a glorious degree fulfilled on earth, far beyond whatever yet has been; I mean the time of the church's latter-day glory. This is what the words of our text have a more direct respect to; and this is what is prophesied of in Hos. ii. 19, 20. "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." And this is what is especially intended by the marriage of the Lamb, in Rev. xix.

We are sure this day will come: and we have many reasons to think that it is approaching; from the fulfilment of almost every thing that the prophecies speak of as preceding it, and their having been fulfilled now a long time; and from the general earnest expectations of the church of God, and the best of her ministers and members, and the late extraordinary things that have appeared in the church of God, and appertaining to the state of religion, and the present aspects of divine Providence, which the time will not allow me largely to insist upon.

As the happiness of that day will have a great resemblance of the glory and joy of the eternal wedding-day of the church after the resurrection of the just; so will the privileges of faithful ministers at that time much resemble those they shall enjoy with the bridegroom and bride, as to honour and happiness, in eternal glory. This is the time especially intended in the text, wherein it is said, "as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee." And it is after in the prophecies spoken of as a great part of the glory of that time, that then the church should be so well supplied with faithful ministers. So in the next verse to the text, "I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, that shall never hold their peace, day nor night." So, Isa. xxx. 20, 21. "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."

Jer iii. 15. "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." And, chap. xxiii. 4. "And I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them." And the great privilege and joy of faithful ministers at that day is foretold in Isa. lli. 8. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing: For they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

And as that day must needs be approaching, and we ourselves have lately seen some things which we have reason to hope are forerunners of it; certainly it should strongly excite us to endeavour to be such pastors as God has promised to bless his church with at that time; that if any of us should live to see the dawning of that glorious day, we might share in the blessedness of it, and then be called, as the friends of the bridegroom, to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and partake of that joy in which heaven and earth, angels and saints, and Christ and his church, shall be united at that time.

But here I would apply the exhortation in a few words to that minister of Christ, who above all others is concerned in the solemnity of this day, who is now to be united to, and set over this people as their pastor.

You have now heard, Reverend Sir, the great importance, and high ends of the office of an evangelical pastor, and the glorious privileges of such as are faithful in this office, imperfectly represented. May God grant that your union with this people, this day, as their pastor, may be such, that God's people here may have the great promise God makes to his church in the text, now fulfilled unto them. May you now, as one of the precious sons of Zion, take this part of Christ's church by the hand, in the name of your great Master the glorious bridegroom, with a heart devoted unto him with true adoration and supreme affection, and for his sake knit to this people, in a spiritual and pure love, and as it were a conjugal tenderness; ardently desiring that great happiness for them, which you have now heard Christ has chosen his church unto, and has shed his blood to obtain for her; being yourself ready to spend and be spent for them; remembering the great errand on which Christ sends you to them, viz. to woo and win their hearts, and espouse their souls to him, and to bring up his elect spouse, and to fit and adorn her for his embraces; that you may in due time present her a chaste virgin to him, for him to rejoice over, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride. How honourable is this business

that Christ employs you in ! and how joyfully should you perform it ! When Abraham's faithful servant was sent to take a wife for his master's son, how engaged was he in the business ; and how joyful was he when he succeeded ! With what joy did he bow his head and worship, and bless the Lord God of his master, for his mercy and his truth in making his way prosperous ! And what a joyful meeting may we conclude he had with Isaac, when he met him in the field, by the well of Laba-roi, and there presented his beauteous Rebekah to him, and told him all things that he had done ! But this was but a shadow of that joy that you shall have, if you imitate his fidelity, in the day when you shall meet your glorious Master, and present Christ's church in this place, as a chaste and beautiful virgin unto him.

We trust, dear Sir, that you will esteem it a most blessed employment, to spend your time and skill in adorning Christ's bride for her marriage with the Lamb, and that it is work which you will do with delight ; and that you will take heed that the ornaments you put upon her are of the right sort, what shall be indeed beautiful and precious in the eyes of the bridegroom, that she may be all glorious within, and her cloathing of wrought gold ; that on the wedding day she may stand on the King's right hand in gold of Ophir.

The joyful day is coming, when the spouse of Christ shall be led to the King in raiment of needle-work ; and angels and faithful ministers will be the servants that shall lead her in. And you, Sir, if you are faithful in the charge now to be committed to you, shall be joined with glorious angels in that honourable and joyful service ; but with this difference, that you shall have the higher privilege. Angels and faithful ministers shall be together in bringing in Christ's bride into his palace, and presenting her to him. But faithful ministers shall have a much higher participation of the joy of that occasion. They shall have a greater and more immediate participation with the bride in her joy ; for they shall not only be ministers to the church as the angels are, but parts of the church, principal members of the bride. And as such, at the same time that angels do the part of ministring spirits to the bride, when they conduct her to the bridegroom, they shall also do the part of ministring spirits to faithful ministers. And they shall also have a higher participation with the bridegroom than the angels, in his rejoicing at that time ; for they shall be nearer to him than they. They are also his members, and are honoured as the principal instruments of espousing the saints

to him, and fitting them for his enjoyment; and therefore they will be more the crown of rejoicing of faithful ministers, than of the angels of heaven.

So great, dear Sir, is the honour and joy that is set before you, to engage you to faithfulness in your pastoral care of this people; so glorious the prize that Christ has set up to engage you to run the race that is set before you.

I would now conclude with a few words to the people of this congregation, whose souls are now to be committed to the care of that minister of Christ, whom they have chosen as their pastor.

Let me take occasion, dear brethren, from what has been said, to exhort you—not forgetting the respect, honour, and reverence, that will ever be due from you to your former pastor, who has served you so long in that work, but by reason of age and growing infirmities, and the prospect of his place being so happily supplied by a successor, has seen meet to relinquish the burden of the pastoral charge over you—to perform the duties that belong to you, in your part of that relation and union now to be established between you and your elect pastor. Receive him as the messenger of the Lord of hosts, one that in his office represents the glorious bridegroom of the church; love and honour him, and willingly submit yourselves to him, as a virgin when married to an husband. Surely the feet of that messenger should be beautiful, that comes to you on such a blessed errand as that which you have heard, to espouse you to the eternal Son of God, and to fit you for, and lead you to him as your bridegroom. Your chosen pastor comes to you on this errand, and he comes in the name of the bridegroom, so empowered by him, and representing him, that in receiving him, you will receive Christ, and in rejecting him, you will reject Christ.

Be exhorted to treat your pastor as the beautiful and virtuous Rebekah treated Abraham's servant. She most charitably and hospitably entertained him, provided lodging and food for him and his company, and took care that he should be comfortably entertained and supplied in all respects, while he continued in his embassy; and that was the note or mark of distinction which God himself gave him, by which he should know the true spouse of Isaac from all others of the daughters of the city. Therefore in this respect approve yourselves as the true spouse of Christ, by giving kind entertainment to your minister that comes to espouse you to the antetype of Isaac.

Provide for his outward subsistence and comfort, with the like chearfulness that Rebekah did for Abraham's servant. You have an account of her alacrity and liberality in supplying him, in Gen. xxiv. 18. &c. Say as her brother did, ver. 31. "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord."

Thus you should entertain your pastor. But this is not that wherein your duty towards him chiefly lies: The main thing is to comply with him in his great errand, and to yield to the suit that he makes to you in the name of Christ, to be his bride. In this you should be like Rebekah: she was, from what she heard of Isaac, and God's covenant with him, and blessing upon him, from the mouth of Abraham's servant, willing for ever to forsake her own country, and her father's house, to go into a country she had never seen, to be Isaac's wife, whom also she never saw. After she had heard what the servant had to say, and her old friends had a mind she should put off the affair for the present—but it was insisted on that she should go immediately—and she was asked "whether she would go with this man," she said, "I will go:" and she left her kindred, and followed the man through all that long journey, till he had brought her unto Isaac, and they three had that joyful meeting in Canaan. If you will this day receive your pastor in that union that is now to be established between him and you, it will be a joyful day in this place, and the joy will be like the joy of espousals, as when a young man marries a virgin; and it will not only be a joyful day in East-Hampton, but it will doubtless be a joyful day in heaven, on your account. And your joy will be a faint resemblance, and a fore-runner of that future joy, when Christ shall rejoice over you as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, in heavenly glory.

And if your pastor be faithful in his office, and you hearken and yield to him in that great errand on which Christ sends him to you, the time will come, wherein you and your pastor will be each others crown of rejoicing, and wherein Christ and he and you shall all meet together at the glorious marriage of the Lamb, and shall rejoice in and over one another, with perfect, uninterrupted, never ending and never fading joy.

SERMON III.*

TRUE SAINTS, WHEN ABSENT FROM THE BODY, ARE PRESENT
WITH THE LORD.

2 Cor. v. 8.

*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from
the body, and to be present with the Lord.*

THE Apostle in this place is giving a reason why he went on with so much boldness and immoveable stedfastness, through such labours, sufferings, and dangers of his life, in the service of his Lord; for which his enemies, the false teachers among the Corinthians, sometimes reproached him as being beside himself, and driven on by a kind of madness.— In the latter part of the preceding chapter, the Apostle informs the Christian Corinthians, that the reason why he did thus, was, that he firmly believed the promises that Christ had made to his faithful servants of a glorious future eternal reward, and knew that these present afflictions were light, and but for a moment, in comparison of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The same discourse is continued in this chapter; wherein the Apostle further insists on the reason he had given of his constancy in suffering, and exposing himself to death in the work of the ministry, even

* Preached on the day of the funeral of the Rev. Mr. David Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians, from the Honourable Society in Scotland for the propagation of Christian Knowledge, and Pastor of a Church of Christian Indians in New-Jersey; who died at Northampton in New-England, October 9, 1747, in the 30th year of his age, and was interred on the 12th following.

the more happy state he expected after death. And this is the subject of my text; wherein may be observed,

1. The great future privilege, which the Apostle hoped for; that of being present with Christ. The words in the original properly signify dwelling with Christ, as in the same country or city, or making a home with Christ.

2. When the Apostle looked for this privilege, viz. when he should be absent from the body. He signifies the same thing in his Epistle to the Philippians, chap. i. 22, 23. "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour. Yet what I shall chuse, I wot not. For I am in a strait between two; having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

3. The value the Apostle set on this privilege. It was such, that for the sake of it, he chose to be absent from the body. He was willing rather, or (as the word properly signifies) it were more pleasing to him, to part with the present life, and all its enjoyments, for the sake of being possessed of this great benefit.

4. The present benefit which the Apostle had, by his faith and hope of this future privilege, viz. that hence he received courage, assurance, and constancy of mind: agreeable to the proper import of the word that is rendered, "we are confident." The Apostle is now giving a reason of that fortitude and immoveable stability of mind with which he went through those extreme labours, hardships, and dangers, which he mentions in this discourse; so that, in the midst of all he did not faint, was not discouraged, but had constant light, and inward support, strength, and comfort in the midst of all: agreeable to the 10th verse of the foregoing chapter, "For which cause, we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." And the same is expressed more particularly in the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of that chapter, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." And in the next chap. ver. 4—10. "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the

right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Among the many useful observations that might be raised from the text, I shall at this time only insist on that which lies most plainly before us in the words; viz.—*The souls of true saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ.*—And they

Go to be with Christ, in the following respects :

I. They go to dwell in the same blessed abode with the glorified human nature of Christ.

The human nature of Christ is yet in being. He still continues, and will continue to all eternity, to be both God and man. His whole human nature remains: not only his human soul, but also his human body. His dead body rose from the dead; and the same that was raised from the dead, is exalted and glorified at God's right hand; that which was dead is now alive, and lives for evermore.

And therefore there is a certain place, a particular part of the external creation, to which Christ is gone, and where he remains. And this place is that which we call the highest heaven, or the heaven of heavens: a place beyond all the visible heavens. Eph. iv. 9, 10. "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens." This is the same which the Apostle calls the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2. reckoning the ærial heaven as the first, the starry heaven as the second, and the highest heaven as the third. This is the abode of the holy angels: they are called "the angels of heaven," Matth. xxiv. 36. "The angels which are in heaven," Mark xiii. 32. "The angels of God in heaven," Matth. xxii. 30. and Mark xii. 25. They are said "always to behold the face of the Father which is in heaven," Matth. xviii. 10. And they are elsewhere often represented as before the throne of God, or surrounding his throne in heaven, and sent from thence, and descending from thence on messages to this world. And thither it is that the souls of departed saints are conducted,

when they die. They are not reserved in some abode distinct from the highest heaven ; a place of rest, which they are kept in, till the day of judgment ; such as some imagine, which they call the *hodes* of the happy : but they go directly to heaven itself. This is the saints home, being their Father's house : they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and this is the other and better country to which they are travelling, Heb. xi. 13—16. This is the city they belong to ; Philip. iii. 20. " Our conversation, (or, as the word properly signifies, citizenship) is in heaven." Therefore this undoubtedly is the place the Apostle has respect to in my text, when he says, " We are willing to forsake our former house, the body, and to dwell in the same house, city or country, wherein Christ dwells ;" which is the proper import of the original. What can this house, or city, or country be, but that house, which is elsewhere spoken of as their proper home, and their Father's house, and the city and country to which they properly belong, and whither they are travelling all the while they continue in this world, and the house, city, and country where we know the human nature of Christ is ? This is the saints rest ; here their hearts are while they live ; and here their treasure is : " The inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, that is designed for them, is reserved in heaven ;" 1 Pet. i. 4. and therefore they never can have their proper and full rest till they come here. So that undoubtedly their souls, when absent from their bodies, (when the Scriptures represent them as in a state of perfect rest) arrive hither. Those two saints, who left this world without dying, viz. Enoch and Elijah, went to heaven. Elijah was seen ascending up to heaven, as Christ was. And to the same resting place, there is all reason to think, those saints go, who leave this world by death. Moses, when he died in the top of the Mount, ascended to the same glorious abode with Elias, who ascended without dying. They are companions in another world ; as they appeared together at Christ's transfiguration. They were together at that time with Christ in the Mount, when there was a specimen or sample of his glorification in heaven. And doubtless they were also together afterwards with him, when he was actually and fully glorified in heaven. And thither undoubtedly it was, that the soul of Stephen ascended, when he expired. The circumstances of his death demonstrate it, Acts vii. 55, &c. " He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the

heavens opened, and the Son of man, (i. e. Jesus in his human nature), standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him.—And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Before his death he had an extraordinary view of the glory that his Saviour had received in heaven, not only for himself, but also for all his faithful followers; that he might be encouraged, by the hopes of this glory, cheerfully to lay down his life for his sake. Accordingly he dies in the hope of this, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” By which doubtless he meant, “receive my spirit to be with thee, in that glory, wherein I have now seen thee, in heaven, at the right hand of God.” And thither it was that the soul of the penitent thief on the cross ascended. Christ said to him, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Paradise is the same with the third heaven; as appears by 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3, 4. There what is called the third heaven in the second verse, is in the fourth verse called paradise. The departed souls of the apostles and prophets are in heaven; as is manifest from Rev. xviii. 20. “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets.” The church of God is distinguished in Scripture, from time to time, into these two parts; that part of it which is in heaven, and that which is in earth; Eph. iii. 14, 15. “Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” Col. i. 20. “And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.” Now what things in heaven are they for whom peace has been made by the blood of Christ’s cross, and who have by him been reconciled to God, but the saints in heaven? In like manner we read, Eph. i. 10. of “God’s gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.” The spirits of just men made perfect are in the same city of the living God, and heavenly Jerusalem, with the innumerable company of angels, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; as is manifest by Heb. xii. 22—24. The church of God is often in Scripture called Jerusalem; and the Apostle speaks of the Jerusalem which is above, or which is in heaven, as the mother of us all: but if no part of the church be in heaven, or none but Enoch and Elias, it is not likely

that the church would be called the Jerusalem which is in heaven.

II. The souls of true saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ, to dwell in the immediate, full, and constant view of him.

When we are absent from our dear friends, they are out of sight; but when we are with them, we have the opportunity and satisfaction of seeing them. So while the saints are in the body, and are absent from the Lord, he is in several respects out of sight, 1 Pet. i. 8. "Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing," &c. They have indeed, in this world, a spiritual sight of Christ; but they see through a glass darkly, and with great interruption: but in heaven, they see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "The pure in heart are blessed; for they shall see God," Matth. v. 8. Their beatific vision of God is in Christ, who is that brightness or effulgence of God's glory, by which his glory shines forth in heaven, to the view of saints and angels there, as well as here on earth. This is the Sun of righteousness, that is not only the light of this world, but is also the sun that enlightens the heavenly Jerusalem; by whose bright beams it is that the glory of God shines forth there, to the enlightening and making happy all the glorious inhabitants. "The Lamb is the light thereof; and so the glory of God doth lighten it," Rev. xxi. 23. None sees God the Father immediately, who is the King eternal, immortal, invisible: Christ is the image of that invisible God, by which he is seen by all elect creatures. The only begotten Son that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, and manifested him. None has ever immediately seen the Father, but the Son; and none else sees the Father any other way, than by the Son's revealing him. And in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect behold his glory. They see the glory of his divine nature, consisting in all the glory of the Godhead, the beauty of all his perfections; his great majesty, almighty power, his infinite wisdom, holiness, and grace, and they see the beauty of his glorified human nature, and the glory which the Father hath given him, as God man and Mediator. For this end, Christ desired that his saints might "be with him, that they might behold his glory," John, xvii. 24. And when the souls of the saints leave their bodies, to go to be with Christ, they behold the marvellous glory of that great work of redemption, and of the glorious way of salvation by him; which

the angels desire to look into. They have a most clear view of the unfathomable depths of the manifold wisdom and knowledge of God ; and the most bright displays of the infinite purity and holiness of God which appear in that way and work : and see in another manner than the saints do here, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height of the grace and love of Christ, appearing in his redemption. And as they see the unspeakable riches and glory of the attribute of God's grace, so they most clearly behold and understand Christ's eternal and unmeasurable dying love to them in particular. And in short, they see every thing in Christ that tends to kindle, enflame, and gratify love, and every thing that tends to satisfy them : And that in the most clear and glorious manner, without any darkness or delusion, without any impediment or interruption. Now the saints, while in the body, see something of Christ's glory and love ; as, in the dawning of the morning, we see something of the reflected light of the sun mingled with darkness : but when separated from the body, they see their glorious and loving Redeemer, as we see the sun when risen, and shewing his whole disk above the horizon, by his direct beams, in a clear hemisphere, and with perfect day.

III: The souls of true saints, when absent from the body, go to be with Jesus Christ, as they are brought into a most perfect conformity to, and union with him. Their spiritual conformity is begun while they are in the body. Here beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image ; but when they come to see him as he is, in heaven, then they become like him in another manner. That perfect sight will abolish all remains of deformity, disagreement, and sinful unlikeness ; as all darkness is abolished before the full blaze of the sun's meridian light. As it is impossible that the least degree of obscurity should remain before such light ; so it is impossible the least degree of sin and spiritual deformity should remain with such a view of the spiritual beauty and glory of Christ, as the saints enjoy in heaven, when they see that Sun of Righteousness without a cloud. They themselves shall not only shine forth as the sun, but shall be as little suns, without a spot. For then is come the time when Christ presents his saints to himself, in glorious beauty ; "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ;" and having holiness without a blemish.

Then the saints' union with Christ is perfected. This also

is begun in this world. The *relative* union is both begun and perfected at once, when the soul first being quickened by him closes with Christ by faith. The *real* union, consisting in the vital union and that of hearts and affections, is begun in this world and perfected in the next. The union of the heart of a believer to Christ is begun when it is drawn to him by the first discovery of divine excellency, at conversion; and consequent on this drawing and closing of his heart with Christ, is established a mutual vital union with Christ; whereby the believer becomes a living branch of the true vine, living by a communication of the sap and vital juice of the stock and root; and a member of Christ's mystical body, living by a communication of spiritual and vital influences from the head, and by a kind of participation of Christ's own life. But while the saints are in the body, there is much remaining distance between Christ and them. There are remainders of alienation, and the vital union is very imperfect; and so consequently are the communications of spiritual life and vital influences. There is much between Christ and believers to keep them asunder, much indwelling sin, much temptation, an heavy-molded frail body, and a world of carnal objects, to keep off the soul from Christ, and hinder a perfect coalescence. But when the soul leaves the body, all these clogs and hindrances shall be removed, every separating wall shall be broken down, and every impediment taken out of the way, and all distance shall cease; the heart shall be wholly and perfectly drawn, and most firmly and for ever attached and bound to him, by a perfect view of his glory. And the vital union shall then be brought to perfection; the soul shall live perfectly in and upon Christ, being perfectly filled with his spirit, and animated by his vital influences; living as it were only by Christ's life, without any remainder of spiritual death, or carnal life. *

IV. Departed souls of saints are with Christ, as they enjoy a glorious and immediate intercourse and converse with him.

While we are present with our friends, we have opportunity for that free and immediate conversation with them, which we cannot have in absence from them. And therefore, by reason of the vastly more free, perfect, and immediate intercourse with Christ, which the saints enjoy when absent

* See vol. vi. p. 242.

from the body, they are fitly represented as present with him.

The most intimate intercourse becomes that relation which the saints stand in to Jesus Christ; and especially becomes that most perfect and glorious union they shall be brought into with him in heaven. They are not merely Christ's servants, but his friends, John xv. 15. His brethren and companions; Psal. cxxii. 8. yea, they are the spouse of Christ. They are espoused or betrothed to Christ while in the body; but when they go to heaven, they enter into the King's palace, their marriage with him is come, and the King brings them into his chambers indeed. They then go to dwell with Christ constantly, to enjoy the most perfect converse with him. Christ conversed in the most friendly manner with his disciples on earth; he admitted one of them to lean on his bosom; but they are admitted much more fully and freely to converse with him in heaven. Though Christ be there in a state of glorious exaltation, reigning in the majesty and glory of the sovereign Lord and God of heaven and earth, angels and men; yet this will not hinder intimacy and freedom of intercourse, but rather promote it. For he is thus exalted, not only for himself, but for them; he is instated in this glory of head over all things for their sakes, that they might be exalted and glorified; and when they go to heaven where he is, they are exalted and glorified with him; and shall not be kept at a more awful distance from Christ, but shall be admitted nearer, and to a greater intimacy. For they shall be unspeakably more fit for it, and Christ in more fit circumstances to bestow on them this blessedness. Their seeing the great glory of their friend and Redeemer, will not awe them to a distance, and make them afraid of a near approach; but on the contrary, will most powerfully draw them near, and encourage and engage them to holy freedom. For they will know that it is he that is their own Redeemer, and beloved friend and bridegroom; the very same that loved them with a dying love, and redeemed them to God by his blood; Matt. xiv. 27. "It is I; be not afraid." Rev. i. 17, 18. "Fear not;—I am he that liveth, and was dead." And the nature of this glory of Christ which they shall behold, will be such as will draw and encourage them; for they will not only see infinite majesty and greatness, but infinite grace, condescension, mildness, gentleness and sweetness, equal to his majesty. For he appears in heaven, not only as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," but as the Lamb in the midst of the throne," Rev. v. 5; 6. and

he shall be their shepherd, to "feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water," Rev. vii. 17. so that the sight of Christ's great kingly majesty will be no terror to them; but will only serve the more to heighten their pleasure and surprise. When Mary was about to embrace Christ, being full of joy at the sight of him again alive after his crucifixion, Christ forbids her to do it for the present; because he was not yet ascended, John xx. 16, 17 "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." As if he had said, "This is not the time and place for that freedom your love to me desires: That is appointed for heaven, after my ascension. I am going thither: and you my true disciples, shall, as my brethren and companions, soon be with me in my glory. And then there shall be no restraint. That is the place appointed for the most perfect expressions of complacency and endearment, and full enjoyment of mutual love." And accordingly the souls of departed saints with Christ in heaven, shall have Christ as it were unbosomed unto them, manifesting those infinite riches of love towards them, that have been there from eternity: and they shall be enabled to express their love to him, in an incomparably better manner than ever they could while in the body. Thus they shall eat and drink abundantly, and swim in the ocean of love, and be eternally swallowed up on the infinitely bright, and infinitely mild and sweet beams of divine love; eternally receiving that light, eternally full of it, and eternally compassed round with it, and everlastingly reflecting it back again to its fountain.

V. The souls of the saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ, as they are received to a glorious fellowship with Christ in his blessedness.

As the wife is received to a joint possession of her husband's estate, and as the wife of a prince partakes with him in his princely possessions and honours; so the church, the spouse of Christ, when the marriage comes, and she is received to dwell with him in heaven, shall partake with him in his glory. When Christ rose from the dead, and took possession of eternal life; this was not as a private person, but as the public head of all his redeemed people. He took possession of it for them, as well as for himself; and they are

“quicken together with him, and raised up together.”—And so when he ascended into heaven, and was exalted to great glory there, this also was as a public person: he took possession of heaven not only for himself, but his people, as their forerunner and head, that they might ascend also, “and sit together in heavenly places with him,” Eph. ii. 5, 6. “Christ writes upon them his new name,” Rev. iii. 12. i. e. He makes them partakers of his own glory and exaltation in heaven. His new name is that new honour and glory that the Father invested him with, when he set him on his own right hand: As a prince, when he advances any one to new dignity in his kingdom, gives him a new title. Christ and his saints shall be glorified together, Rom. viii. 17.

The saints in heaven have communion, or a joint participation with Christ in his glory and blessedness in heaven, in the following respects more especially.

1. They partake with him in the ineffable delights he has in heaven, in the enjoyment of his Father:

When Christ ascended into heaven, he was received to a glorious and peculiar joy and blessedness in the enjoyment of his Father, who in his passion hid his face from him; such an enjoyment as became the relation he stood in to the Father, and such as was a meet reward for the great and hard service he had performed on earth. Then “God shewed him the path of life, and brought him into his presence, where is fulness of joy, and to sit on his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore,” as Psal. xvi. 11. “Then the Father made him most blessed for ever: he made him exceeding glad with his countenance;” as in Psal. xxi. 6. The saints, by virtue of their union with Christ, and being his members, do in some sort partake of his child-like relation to the Father; and so are heirs with him of his happiness in the enjoyment of his Father; as seems to be intimated by the Apostle, in Gal. iv. 4—7. The spouse of Christ, by virtue of her espousals to that only begotten Son of God, is, as it were, a partaker of his filial relation to God, and becomes the King’s daughter, Psal. xlv. 13. and so partakes with her divine husband in his enjoyment of “his Father and her-Father, his God and her God.” A promise of this seems to be implied in those words of Christ to Mary, John xx. 17. Thus Christ’s faithful servants “enter into the joy of their Lord,” Matt. xxv. 21.—23. and “Christ’s joy remains in them;” agreeable to those words of Christ, John, xv. 11. Christ from eternity

is, as it were, in the bosom of the Father, as the object of his infinite complacency. In him is the Father's eternal happiness. Before the world was, he was with the Father, in the enjoyment of his infinite love; and had infinite delight and blessedness in that enjoyment; as he declares of himself in Prov. viii. 30. "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." And when Christ ascended to the Father after his passion, he went to him, to the enjoyment of the same glory and blessedness in the enjoyment of his love; agreeable to his prayer the evening before his crucifixion, John xvii. 5. "And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." And in the same prayer, he manifests it to be his will, that his true disciples should be with him in the enjoyment of that joy and glory, which he then asked for himself; verse 13. "That my joy might be fulfilled in themselves;" verse 22. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." This glory and joy of Christ, which the saints are to enjoy with him, is that which he has in the enjoyment of the Father's infinite love to him; as appears by the last words of that prayer of our Lord, verse 26. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them." The love which the Father has to his Son is great indeed; the Deity does, as it were, wholly and entirely flow out in a stream of love to Christ; and the joy and pleasure of Christ is proportionably great.—This is the stream of Christ's delights, the river of his infinite pleasure; which he will make his saints to drink of with him; agreeable to Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." The saints shall have pleasure in partaking with Christ in his pleasure, and shall see light in his light. They shall partake with Christ of the same river of pleasure, shall drink of the same water of life, and of the same new wine in the Father's kingdom; Matt. xxvi. 29. That new wine is especially the joy and happiness that Christ and his true disciples shall partake of together in glory, which is the purchase of Christ's blood, or the reward of his obedience unto death. Christ, at his ascension into heaven, received everlasting pleasures at his Father's right hand, and in the enjoyment of his love, as the reward of his own death, or obedience unto death. But the same righteousness is reckoned to both head and members; and both

shall have fellowship in the same reward, each according to their distinct capacity.

That the saints in heaven have such a communion with Christ in his joy, and do so partake with him in his own enjoyment of the Father, greatly manifests the transcendent excellency of their happiness, and their being admitted to a vastly higher privilege in glory than the angels.

2. The saints in heaven are received to a fellowship or participation with Christ, in the glory of that dominion to which the Father hath exalted him.

The saints, when they ascend to heaven, and are made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places, and are partakers of the glory of his exaltation, are exalted to reign with him. They are through him made kings and priests, and reign with him, and in him, over the same kingdom. As the Father hath appointed unto him a kingdom, so he has appointed to them. The Father has appointed the Son to reign over his own kingdom, and the Son appoints his saints to reign in his. The Father has given to Christ to sit with him on his throne, and Christ gives to the saints to sit with him on his throne, agreeable to Christ's promise; Rev. iii. 21. Christ, as God's Son, is the heir of his kingdom, and the saints are joint-heirs with Christ; which implies, that they are heirs of the same inheritance, to possess the same kingdom, in and with him, according to their capacity. Christ in his kingdom reigns over heaven and earth; he is appointed the heir of all things; and so all things are the saints'; "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come," all are theirs; because they are Christ's, and united to him, 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. The angels are given to Christ as a part of his dominion; they are all given to wait upon him as ministering spirits to him: so also they all, even the highest and most dignified of them, "ministering spirits, to minister to them who are the heirs of salvation." They are *Christ's* angels, and they are also *their* angels. Such is the saints union with Christ, and their interest in him, that what he possesses, they possess, in a much more perfect and blessed manner than if all things were given to them separately, and by themselves, to be disposed of according to their discretion. They are now disposed of so as, in every respect, to be most for their blessedness, by an infinitely better discretion than their own; and in being disposed of by their head and husband, between whom and them there is the most perfect union of hearts, and the most perfect union of wills.

As the glorified spouse of this great King reigns with and in him, in his dominion over the universe, so more especially does she partake with him in the joy and glory of his reign in his kingdom of grace; which is more peculiarly the kingdom that he possesses as head of the church, and is that kingdom wherein she is more especially interested. It was especially to reign in this kingdom, that God the Father exalted him to his throne in heaven: He set his King on his holy hill of Zion, especially that he might reign over Zion, or over his church, in his kingdom of grace; and that he might be under the best advantages to carry on the designs of his love in this lower world. And therefore undoubtedly the saints in heaven are partakers with Christ in the joy and glory of the advancement and prosperity of his kingdom of grace on earth, and success of his gospel here, which he looks on as the peculiar glory of his reign. The good shepherd rejoices when he finds but one sheep that was lost; and his friends and neighbours in heaven rejoice with him on that occasion. That part of the family that is in heaven are surely not unacquainted with the affairs of that part of the same family that is on earth. They who are with the King, and the royal family that dwell in his palace, are not kept in ignorance of the affairs of his kingdom. The saints in heaven are with the angels, the King's ministers, by which he manages the affairs of his kingdom, and who are continually ascending and descending from heaven to the earth, and one or other of them daily employed as ministring spirits to each individual member of the church below. To this we may add, the continual ascending of the souls of departed saints from all parts of the militant church. On these accounts the saints in heaven must needs be under a thousand times greater advantage than we here, for a full view of the state of the church on earth, and a speedy, direct, and certain acquaintance with all its affairs in every part. And that which gives them much greater advantage for such an acquaintance than the things already mentioned, is their being constantly in the immediate presence of Christ, and in the enjoyment of the most perfect intercourse with him, who is the King who manages all these affairs, and has an absolutely perfect knowledge of them. Christ is the head of the whole glorified assembly; they are mystically his glorified body: and what the head sees, it sees for, the information of the whole body, according to its capacity: and what the head enjoys, is for the joy of the whole body. The saints, in leaving this world, and ascending to heaven, do not go out of the sight of things appertaining to

Christ's kingdom on earth ; but, on the contrary, they go out of a state of obscurity, and ascend above the mists and clouds into the clearest light ; to a pinnacle, in the very centre of light, where every thing appears in clear view. They have as much greater advantage to view the state of Christ's kingdom, and the works of the new creation here, than while they were in this world, as a man that ascends to the top of a high mountain has greater advantage to view the face of the earth, than he had while he was in a deep valley, or thick forest below, surrounded on every side with those things that impeded and limited his prospect. Nor do they view as indifferent or unconcerned spectators, any more than Christ himself is an unconcerned spectator. The happiness of the saints in heaven consists very much in beholding the glory of God appearing in the work of redemption : for it is by this chiefly that God manifests his glory, the glory of his wisdom, holiness, grace, and other perfections, to both saints and angels ; as is apparent by many scriptures. And therefore undoubtedly their happiness consists very much in beholding the progress of this work in its application and success, and the steps by which infinite power and wisdom brings it to its consummation. And the saints in heaven are under unspeakably greater advantage to take the pleasure of beholding the progress of this work on earth than we are ; as they are under greater advantages to see and understand the marvellous steps which divine wisdom takes in all that is done, and the glorious ends he obtains, the opposition Satan makes, and how he is baffled and overthrown. They can better see the connection of one event with another, and the beautiful order of all things that come to pass in the church in different ages that to us appear like confusion. Nor do they only view these things, and rejoice in them, as a glorious and beautiful sight, but as persons interested, as Christ is interested ; as possessing these things in Christ, and reigning with him, in this kingdom. Christ's success in his work of redemption, in bringing home souls to himself, applying his saving benefits by his Spirit, and the advancement of the kingdom of grace in the world, is the reward especially promised to him by his Father in the covenant of redemption, for the hard and difficult service he performed while in the form of a servant ; as is manifest by Isa. liii. 10—12. But the saints shall be rewarded with him. They shall partake with him in the joy of this reward ; for this obedience that is thus rewarded is reckoned to them as they are his members. This was especially the joy that was

set before Christ, for the sake of which he endured the cross and despised the shame. And his joy is the joy of all heaven. They that are with him in heaven are under much the greatest advantages to partake with him in this joy; for they have a perfect communion with him through whom, and in fellowship with whom, they enjoy and possess their whole inheritance, all their heavenly happiness; as much as the whole body has all its pleasure of music by the ear, and all the pleasure of its food by the mouth and stomach; and all the benefit and refreshment of the air by the lungs. The saints while on earth pray and labour for the same thing that Christ laboured for, viz. the advancement of the kingdom of God among men, the prosperity of Zion, and the flourishing of religion in this world. And most of them have been made partakers with their head in his sufferings, and “filled up (as the Apostle expresses it) that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ” And therefore they shall partake with him of the glory and joy of the end obtained; Rom vii. 17. “We are joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” 2 Tim. ii. 12. “If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.” Christ, when his sufferings were past, and he left the earth and ascended into heaven, was so far from having done with his kingdom in this world, that it was as it were but then begun; and he ascended for that very end, that he might more fully possess and enjoy this kingdom, that he might reign in it, and be under the best advantages for it: In like manner, no more have the saints done with Christ’s kingdom on earth, when they ascend into heaven. “Christ came (i. e. ascended) with clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and was brought near before him, to the very end, that he might receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve him,” Dan. vii. 13, 14. This shall be eminently fulfilled after the ruin of Antichrist, which is especially the time of Christ’s kingdom. And the same is the time when “the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High God;” as ver. 27. It is because they shall reign in and with Christ, the Most High, as seems intimated in the words that follow; “whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” This is true, not only of the saints on earth, but also the saints in heaven. Hence the saints in heaven, having respect to this time, sing, Rev. v. 10. “We shall reign on the earth.” And

agreeable hereto, it is afterwards represented, that when the fore-mentioned time comes, the souls of them who in former ages had suffered with Christ do reign with him; having as it were given to them new life and joy, in that spiritual blessed resurrection, which shall then be of the church of God on earth; and thus, Matth. v. 5. "The meek (those that meekly and patiently suffer with Christ, and for his sake), shall inherit the earth:" they shall inherit it, and reign on earth with Christ. Christ is the heir of the world; and when the appointed time of his kingdom comes, his inheritance shall be given him, and then the meek, who are joint heirs, shall inherit the earth. The place in the Old Testament whence the words are taken, leads to a true interpretation of them; Psalm xxxvii. 11. "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." That there is reference in these latter words, "The abundance of peace," to the peace and blessedness of the latter days, we may be satisfied by comparing these words with Psalm lxxii. 7. "In his days shall be abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth:" And Jer. xxxiii, 6. "I will reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth:" Also Isa. ii. 4. Mic. iv. 3. Isa. xl. 6.—9.; and many other parallel places. The saints in heaven will be as much with Christ in reigning over the nations, and in the glory of his dominion at that time, as they will be with him in the honour of judging the world at the last day. That promise of Christ to his disciples, Matth. xix. 28, 29. seems to have a special respect to the former of these. In ver. 28. Christ promises to the disciples, that hereafter, "when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The saints in heaven reigning on earth in the glorious latter day, is described in language accommodated to this promise of Christ, Rev xx. 4. "And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them; and judgment was given them.—And they reigned with Christ." And the promise, Matth. xix. 29. seems to have its fulfilment at the same time: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or fathers, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life;" i. e. in the time when the saints shall inherit the earth, and reign on earth, the earth, with all its blessings and good things, shall be given in great abundance to the church, to be possessed by the saints. This shall they receive in this present world, and in the future everlasting life. The saints in heaven shall

partake with Christ in the triumph and glory of those victories that he shall obtain in that future glorious time, over the kings and nations of the world, represented by his ruling them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces as a potter's vessel. To which doubtless there is a respect in Rev. ii. 26, 27. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; (and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers) even as I received of my Father." And Psalm cxlix. 5. to the end; "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds; (i. e. in their separate state after death; compare Isa. lvii. 1, 2. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written: This honour have all the saints." Accordingly, when Christ appears riding forth to his victory over Antichrist, Rev. xix. the hosts of heaven appear going forth with him in robes of triumph, ver. 14. And when Antichrist is destroyed, the inhabitants of heaven, and the holy apostles and prophets, are called upon to rejoice, chap. xviii. 20. And the whole multitude of the inhabitants of heaven, on that occasion, appear to exult, and praise God with exceeding joy; chap. xix. 1.—8. and chap. xi. 15. They are also represented as greatly rejoicing on occasion of the ruin of the heathen empire, in the days of Constantine; chap. xii. 10. And it is observable, all along in the visions of that book, that the hosts of heaven appear as much concerned and interested in the events appertaining to the kingdom of Christ here below, as the saints on earth. The day of the commencement of the church's latter-day glory is eminently "the day of Christ's espousals; the day of the gladness of his heart, when as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so he will rejoice over his church." And then will all heaven exceedingly rejoice with him. Thus Rev. xix. 7. "Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come."

Thus Abraham enjoys these things, when they come to pass, which were of old promised to him, and which he saw before hand, and rejoiced in. He will enjoy the fulfilment of the promise of all the families of the earth being blessed in his seed, when it shall be accomplished. And all the ancient patriarchs, who died in faith of promises of glorious things

that should be accomplished in this world, "who had not received the promises, but saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them," actually enjoy them when fulfilled. David actually saw and enjoyed the fulfilment of that promise, in its due time, which was made to him many hundred years before, and was all his salvation and all his desire. Thus Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days pointed out by his own prophecy. Thus the saints of old that died in faith, not having received the promise, are made perfect, and have their faith crowned by the better things accomplished in these latter days of the gospel, Heb. xi. 39, 40. which they see and enjoy.

3. The departed souls of saints have fellowship with Christ, in his blessed and eternal employment of glorifying the Father.

The happiness of heaven consists not only in contemplation, and a mere passive enjoyment, but consists very much in action. And particularly in actively serving and glorifying God. This is expressly mentioned as a great part of the blessedness of the saints in their most perfect state, Rev. xxii. 3. "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." The angels are as a flame of fire in their ardour and activity in God's service: The four animals, Rev. iv. (which are generally supposed to signify the angels), are represented as continually giving praise and glory to God, and are said not to rest day nor night, ver. 8. The souls of departed saints are doubtless become as the angels of God in heaven in this respect. And Jesus Christ is the head of the whole glorious assembly; as in other things appertaining to their blessed state, so in this of their praising and glorifying the Father. When Christ, the night before he was crucified, prayed for his exaltation to glory, it was that he might glorify the Father; John xvii. 1. "These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." And this he doubtless does, now he is in heaven; not only in fulfilling the Father's will, in what he does as Head of the church and Ruler of the universe, but also in leading the heavenly assembly in their praises. When Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, and eat and drank with his disciples at his table (giving them therein a representation and pledge of their future feasting with him, and drinking new wine in his heavenly

Father's kingdom), he at that time led them in their praises to God, in a hymn they sang. And so doubtless he leads his glorified disciples in heaven. David was the sweet psalmist of Israel, and led the great congregation of God's people in their songs of praise. Herein, as well as in innumerable other things, he was a type of Christ, who is often spoken of in Scripture by the name of David. And many of the psalms that David penned, were songs of praise, that he, by the spirit of prophecy, uttered in the name of Christ, as head of the church, and leading the saints in their praises. Christ in heaven leads the glorious assembly in their praises to God, as Moses did the congregation of Israel at the Red Sea: which is implied in its being said, that "they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb," Rev. xv. 2, 3. In Rev. xix. 5. John tells us, that "he heard a voice come out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." Who can it be that utters this voice out of the throne, but the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne, calling on the glorious assembly of saints to praise his Father and their Father, his God and their God? And what the consequence of this voice is, we have an account in the next words: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

APPLICATION.

The use that I would make of what has been said on this subject is of *exhortation*. Let us all be exhorted hence earnestly to seek after this great privilege, that when "we are absent from the body, we may be present with the Lord." We cannot continue always in these earthly tabernacles;—They are very frail, will soon decay and fall, and are continually liable to be overthrown by innumerable means. Our souls must soon leave them, and go into the eternal world.—O, how infinitely great will the privilege and happiness of such be, who at that time shall go to be with Christ in his glory, in the manner that has been represented! The privilege of the twelve disciples was great, in being so constantly with Christ as his family, in his state of humiliation. The privilege of those three disciples was great, who were with him in the mount of his transfiguration; where was exhibited

to them some little semblance of his future glory in heaven, such as they might behold in the present frail, feeble, and sinful state. They were greatly entertained and delighted with what they saw; and were for making tabernacles to dwell there, and return no more down the mount. And great was the privilege of Moses when he was with Christ in Mount Sinai, and besought him to shew him his glory, and he saw his back-parts as he passed by, and proclaimed his name.— But how infinitely greater the privilege of being with Christ in heaven, where he sits on the right hand of God, as the King and God of angels, and of the whole universe, shining forth as the great light, the bright sun of that world of glory; there to dwell in the full, constant, and everlasting view of his beauty and brightness; there most freely and intimately to converse with him, and fully to enjoy his love, as his friends and spouse; there to have fellowship with him in the infinite pleasure and joy he has in the enjoyment of his Father? How transcendent the privilege, there to sit with him on his throne, to reign with him in the possession of all things, and to partake with him in the joy and glory of his victory over his enemies, and the advancement of his kingdom in the world, and to join with him in joyful songs of praise to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God, for ever and ever? Is not such a privilege worth seeking after?

But here, as a special enforcement of this exhortation, I would improve that dispensation of God's holy Providence, which is the sorrowful occasion of our coming together at this time, viz. the death of that eminent servant of Jesus Christ, in the work of the gospel-ministry, whose funeral is this day to be attended; together with what was observable in him, living and dying.

In this dispensation of Providence, God puts us in mind of our mortality, and forewarns us that the time is approaching when we must be absent from the body, and "must all appear (as the Apostle observes in the context), before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one of us may receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or bad."

And in him, whose death we are now called to consider and improve, we have not only an instance of mortality, but an instance of one that, being absent from the body, is present with the Lord; as we have all imaginable reason to conclude. And that, whether we consider the nature of the operations he was under, about the time whence he dates his conversion,

or the nature and course of his inward exercises from that time forward, or his outward conversation and practice in life, or his frame and behaviour during the whole of that long season wherein he looked death in the face.

His convictions of sin, preceding his first consolations in Christ, (as appears by a written account he has left of his inward exercises and experiences) were exceeding deep and thorough. His trouble and exercise of mind, through a sense of guilt and misery, were very great and long-continued, but yet sound and solid; consisting in no unsteady, violent, unaccountable hurries and frights, and strange perturbations of mind; but arising from the most serious consideration, and proper illumination of the conscience to discern and consider the true state of things. And the light let into his mind at conversion, and the influences and exercises that his mind was subject to at that time, appear very agreeable to reason and the gospel of Jesus Christ; the change very great and remarkable, without any appearance of strong impressions on the imagination, sudden flights and pangs of the affections, and vehement emotions in animal nature; but attended with proper intellectual views of the supreme glory of the divine Being, consisting in the infinite dignity and beauty of the perfections of his nature, and of the transcendent excellency of the way of salvation by Christ.—This was about eight years ago, when he was about twenty-one years of age.

Thus God sanctified, and made meet for his use, that vessel which he intended to make of eminent honour in his house, and which he had made of large capacity, having endowed him with very uncommon abilities and gifts of nature. He was a singular instance of a ready invention, natural eloquence, easy flowing expression, sprightly apprehension, quick discernment, and very strong memory; and yet of a very penetrating genius, close and clear thought, and piercing judgment. He had an exact taste. His understanding was quick, strong, and distinguishing.

His learning was very considerable, for which he had a great taste; and he applied himself to his studies in so close a manner when he was at college, that he much injured his health; and was obliged on that account for a while to leave his studies, and return home. He was esteemed one that excelled in learning in that society.

He had an extraordinary knowledge of men, as well as things; had a great insight into human nature, and excelled most that ever I knew in a communicative faculty. He had a

peculiar talent at accommodating himself to the capacities, tempers, and circumstances of those whom he would instruct or counsel.

He had extraordinary gifts for the pulpit. I never had an opportunity to hear him preach, but have often heard him pray; and I think his manner of addressing himself to God, and expressing himself before him, in that duty, almost imitable; such (so far as I may judge) as I have very rarely known equalled. He expressed himself with that exact propriety and pertinency, in such significant, weighty, pungent expressions; with that decent appearance of sincerity, reverence, and solemnity, and great distance from all affectation, as forgetting the presence of men, and as being in the immediate presence of a great and holy God, that I have scarcely ever known paralleled. And his manner of preaching, by what I have often heard of it from good judges, was no less excellent; being clear and instructive, natural, nervous, forcible, moving, and very searching and convincing.— He rejected with disgust an affected noisiness, and violent boisterousness in the pulpit; and yet much disrelished a flat cold delivery, when the subject of discourse, and matter delivered, required affection and earnestness.

Not only had he excellent talents for the study and the pulpit, but also for conversation. He was of a sociable disposition; and was remarkably free, entertaining, and profitable in his ordinary discourse: And had much of a faculty of disputing, defending truth and confuting error.

As he excelled in his judgment and knowledge of things in general, so especially in divinity. He was truly, for one of his standing, an extraordinary divine. But above all, in matters relating to experimental religion. In this, I know I have the concurring opinion of some who have had a name for persons of the best judgment. And according to what ability I have to judge of things of this nature, and according to my opportunities, which of late have been very great, I never knew his equal, of his age and standing, for clear, accurate notions of the nature and essence of true religion, and its distinctions from its various false appearances; which I suppose to be owing to these three things meeting together in him; the strength of his natural genius; and the great opportunities he had of observing others, in various parts, both white people and Indians; and his own great experience.

His experiences of the holy influences of God's Spirit

were not only great at his first conversion, but they were so in a continued course, from that time forward; as appears by a private journal which he kept of his daily inward exercises, from the time of his conversion, until he was disabled by the failing of his strength, a few days before his death. The change which he looked upon as his conversion, was not merely a great change of the *present* views, affections, and frame of his mind; but also the beginning of that work of God on his heart, which God *carried on* from that time to his dying day.* He greatly abhorred the way of such as live on their first work, as though they had now got through their work, and who are thenceforward, by degrees, settled in a cold, lifeless, negligent worldly frame; he had an ill opinion of such persons' religion.

His experiences were very diverse from many things that have lately obtained the reputation, with multitudes, of the very height of Christian experience. About the time that the false religion, which arises chiefly from impressions on the imagination, began first to make a very great appearance in the land, he was for a little while deceived with it, so as to think highly of it. And though he knew he never had such experiences as others told of, he thought it was because others' attainments were beyond his; and so coveted them, and

* This more abundantly appears by further opportunity of acquaintance with his day, since this sermon was delivered. Grace in him seems to have been almost continually, with scarcely the intermission of a day, in very sensible, and indeed vigorous and powerful exercise, in one respect or other. His heart appears to have been exercised, in a continued course, in such things as these, viz. the most ardent and pure love to God; great weanedness from the world, and sense of its vanity; great humiliation: a most abasing sense of his own vile ness; a deep sense of in-dwelling sin, which indeed was most evidently, by far the greatest burden of his life, and more than all other afflictions that he met with put together; great brokenness of heart before God, for his small attainments in grace, that he loved God so little, &c. mourning that he was so unprofitable; longings and earnest reachings of soul after holiness; earnest desires that God might be glorified, and that Christ's kingdom might be advanced in the world; wrestlings with God in prayer for these things; delight in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him; sweet complacence in those whose conversation savoured of true holiness; compassion to the souls of men, and earnest intercessions in secret for them; great resignation to the will of God; a very frequent, most sensible renewed renunciation of all things for Christ, and giving up himself wholly to God, in soul and body; great distrust of his own heart, and universal dependance on God; longings after full deliverance from the body of sin and death, and perfect conformity to God, and perfectly glorifying him in heaven; clear views of eternity, almost as though he were actually out of the body, and had his eyes open in another world; constant watchfulness over his own heart, and continual earnestness in his inward warfare with sin; together with great care, to the utmost, to improve time for God, in his service, and to his glory.

sought after them, but could never obtain them. He told me, that he never had what is called an impulse, or a strong impression on his imagination, in things of religion, in his life. But owned, that during the short time that he thought well of these things, he was tinged with that spirit of false zeal that is wont to attend them. But said that then he was not in his element, but as a fish out of water. And when, after a little while, he came clearly to see the vanity and perniciousness of such things, it cost him abundance of sorrow and distress of mind, and to my knowledge he afterwards freely and openly confessed the errors in conduct that he had run into, and laid himself low before them whom he had offended. And since his conviction of his error in those respects, he has ever had a peculiar abhorrence of that kind of bitter zeal, and those delusive experiences that have been the principal source of it. He detested enthusiasm in all its forms and operations; and abhorred whatever in opinion or experience seemed to verge towards Antinomianism; as, the experiences of those whose first faith consists in believing that Christ died for them in particular; and their first love, in loving God, because they supposed they were the objects of his love; and their assurance of their good estate from some immediate testimony, or suggestion, either with or without texts of Scripture, that their sins are forgiven, that God loves them, &c. and the joys of such as rejoiced more in their own supposed distinction from others, in honour, and privileges, and high experiences, than in God's excellency and Christ's beauty; and the spiritual pride of such laymen, that are for setting up themselves as public teachers, and cry down human learning, and a learned ministry. He greatly disliked a disposition in persons to much noise and show religion, and affecting to be abundant in publishing and proclaiming their own experience; though he did not condemn, but approved of Christians speaking of their experiences, on some occasions, and to some persons, with modesty, discretion and reserve. He abominated the spirit and practice of the generality of the Separatists in this land. I heard him say, once and again, that he had been much with this kind of people, and was acquainted with many of them, in various parts; and that by this acquaintance, he knew that what was chiefly and most generally in repute amongst them, as the power of godliness, was entirely a different thing from that vital piety recommended in the Scripture, and had nothing in it of that nature. He never was more full in condemning these things than in his last illness, and after he ceased to have

any expectation of life: And particularly when he had the greatest and nearest views of approaching eternity; and several times, when he thought himself actually dying, and expected in a few minutes to be in the eternal world, as he himself told me.*

* Since this Sermon was preached, I find what follows in his Diary for the last summer.

"*Thursday, June 18.* I was this day taken exceeding ill, and brought to the gates of death.—In this extreme weak state I continued for several weeks; and was frequently reduced so low as to be utterly speechless, and not able so much as to whisper a word. And even after I had so far revived, as to walk about the house, and to step out of doors, I was exercised every day with a faint turn, which continued usually four or five hours. At which times, though I was not so utterly speechless, but that I could say *yes* or *no*; yet I could not converse at all, nor speak one sentence without making stops for breath. And divers times, in this season, my friends gathered round my bed, to see me breathe my last; which they looked for every moment, as I myself also did.

"How I was the first day or two of my illness, with regard to the exercise of reason, I scarcely know: but I believe I was something shattered, with the violence of the fever, at times. But the third day of my illness, and constantly afterwards, for four or five weeks together, I enjoyed as much serenity of mind, and clearness of thought, as perhaps I ever did in my life. And I think my mind never penetrated with so much ease and freedom into divine things as at this time; and I never felt so capable of demonstrating the truth of many important doctrines of the gospel as now.

"And as I saw clearly the truth of those great doctrines, which are justly styled the doctrines of grace; so I saw with no less clearness, that the essence of true religion consisted in the soul's conformity to God, and acting above all selfish views, for his glory, longing to be for him, to live to him, and please and honour him in all things; and that, from a clear view of his infinite excellency and worthiness in himself, to be beloved, adored, worshipped, and served, by all intelligent creatures. Thus I saw, that when a soul loves God with a supreme love, he therein acts like the blessed God himself, who most justly loves himself in that manner; so when God's interest and his are become one, and he longs that God should be glorified, and rejoices to think that he is unchangeably possessed of the highest glory and blessedness, herein also he acts in conformity to God. In like manner, when the soul is fully resigned to, and rests satisfied and contented with the divine will, here he is also conformed to God.

"I saw further, that as this divine temper, whereby the soul exalts God, and treads itself in the dust, is wrought in the soul by God's discovering his own glorious perfections, in the face of Jesus Christ, to it, by the special influences of his Holy Spirit; so he could not but have regard to it, as his own work: And as it is his image in the soul, he could not but take delight in it. Then I saw again that if God should slight and reject his own moral image, he must needs deny himself; which he cannot do. And thus I saw the stability and infallibility of this religion; and that those who were truly possessed of it, had the most complete and satisfying evidence of their being interested in all the benefits of Christ's redemption, having their hearts conformed to him; and that these, and these only, were qualified for the employments and entertainments of God's kingdom of glory; as none but these would have any relish of the business of heaven, which is to ascribe glory to God, and not to themselves; and that God (though I would speak it with great reverence of his name and perfections) could not, without denying himself, finally cast such away.

As his inward experiences appear to have been of the right kind, and were very remarkable as to their degree, so was his outward behaviour and practice agreeable. He in his whole course acted as one who had indeed sold all for Christ, and had entirely devoted himself to God, and made his glory his highest end, and was fully determined to spend his whole time and strength in his service. He was lively in religion, in the right way ; lively, not only, nor chiefly, with his tongue, in professing and talking ; but lively in the work and business of religion. He was not one of those who are for contriving ways to shun the cross, and get to heaven

“ The next thing I had then to do, was to enquire whether this was my religion. And here God was pleased to help me to the most easy remembrance, and critical review of what had passed in course, of a religious nature, through several of the latter years of my life. And although I could discover much corruption attending my best duties, many selfish views and carnal ends, much spiritual pride, and self-exaltation, and innumerable other evils which compassed me about ; I say, although I now discerned the sins of my holy things, as well as other actions ; yet God was pleased, as I was reviewing, quickly to put this question out of doubt, by shewing me that I had, from time to time, acted above the utmost influence of mere self-love, that I had longed to please and glorify him, as my highest happiness, &c. And this review was through grace attended with a present feeling of the same divine temper of mind. I felt now pleased to think of the glory of God ; and longed for heaven, as a state wherein I might glorify God perfectly, rather than a place of happiness for myself. And this feeling of the love of God in my heart, which I trust the Spirit of God excited in me afresh, was sufficient to give me full satisfaction, and make me long, as I had many times before done, to be with Christ. I did not now want any of the—sudden suggestions, that many are so pleased with, That Christ and his benefits are mine, That God loves me, in order to give me satisfaction about my state. No, my soul now abhorred those delusions of Satan ; which are thought to be the immediate witness of the Spirit, while there is nothing but an empty suggestion of a certain fact, without any gracious discovery of the divine glory, or of the Spirit's work in their own hearts. I saw the awful delusion of this kind of confidences ; as well as of the whole of that religion, which they usually spring from, or at least are the attendants of the false religion of the late day, though a day of wondrous grace ; the imaginations and impressions made only on the animal affections ; together with the sudden suggestions made to the mind by Satan, transformed into an angel of light, of certain facts not revealed in Scripture : These, I say, and many like things, I fear have made up the greater part of the religious appearances in many places.

“ These things I saw with great clearness, when I was thought to be dying, and God gave me great concern for his church and interest in the world at this time : Not so much because the late remarkable influence upon the minds of people was abated, and almost wholly gone, as because of the false religion, the heats of imagination, and wild and selfish commotions of the animal affections, which attended the work of grace, had prevailed so far. This was that which my mind dwelt upon, almost day and night : And this to me was the darkest appearance respecting religion in the land. For it was this chiefly that had prejudiced the world against inward religion. And this I saw was the great misery of all, that so few saw any manner of difference between those exercises that were spiritual and holy, and those which have self-love only, for their beginning, centre, and end.”

with ease and sloth ; but was such an instance of one living a life of labour and self-denial, and spending his strength and substance in pursuing that great end, and the glory of his Redeemer, that perhaps is scarcely to be paralleled in this age in these parts of the world. Much of this may be perceived by any one that reads his printed Journal ; but much more has been learned by long intimate acquaintance with him, and by looking into his Diary since his death, which he purposely concealed in what he published.

And as his desires and labours for the advancement of Christ's kingdom were great, so was his success. God was pleased to make him the instrument of bringing to pass the most remarkable things among the poor savages—in enlightening, awakening, reforming and changing their disposition and manners, and wonderfully transforming them—that perhaps can be produced in these latter ages of the world. An account of this has been given the public in his Journals, drawn up by order of the Honourable Society in Scotland, that employed him ; which I would recommend to the perusal of all such as take pleasure in the wonderful works of God's grace, and would read that which will peculiarly tend both to entertain and profit a Christian mind.*

No less extraordinary than the things already mentioned of him in life, was his constant calmness, peace, assurance and joy in God, during the long time he looked death in the face, without the least hope of recovery ; continuing without interruption to the last ; while his distemper very sensibly preyed upon his vitals, from day to day, and oft brought him to that state in which he looked upon himself, and was thought by others, to be dying. The thoughts of approaching death never seemed in the least to damp, but rather to encourage him, and exhilarate his mind. And the nearer death approached, the more desirous he seemed to be of it. He said, not long before his death, that, “the consideration of the day of death, and the day of judgment, had a long time been peculiarly sweet to him.” And at another time, that, “he could not but think of the meetness there was in throwing such a rotten carcase as his into the grave : It seemed to him to be the right way of disposing of it.” He often used the epithet *glorious*, when speaking of the day of his death, calling it *that glorious day*. On a Sabbath-day morning, September 27, feeling an unusual appetite to food, and

* See vol. iii. p. 319, &c.

looking on it as a sign of approaching death, he said, "he should look on it as a favour, if this might be his dying day, and that he longed for the time" He had before expressed himself desirous of seeing his brother again, whose return had been expected from the Jerseys; but then (speaking of him) he said, "I am willing to go, and never see him again: I care not what I part with, to be for ever with the Lord." Being asked, that morning, how he did? he answered, "I am almost in eternity: God knows, I long to be there. My work is done; I have done with all my friends: All the world is nothing to me." On the evening of the next day, when he thought himself dying, and was apprehended to be so by others, and he could utter himself only by broken whispers, he often repeated the word *Eternity*; and said, "I shall soon be with the holy angels."—He will come; he will not tarry." He told me one night, as he went to bed, that "he expected to die that night." And added, "I am not at all afraid, I am willing to go this night, if it be the will of God. Death is what I long for." He sometimes expressed himself as "nothing to but to die: and being willing to go that minute, if it was the will of God." He sometimes used that expression, "O why is his chariot so long in coming."

He seemed to have remarkable exercises of resignation to the will of God. He once told me, that "he had longed for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit of God, and the glorious times of the church, and hoped they were coming; and should have been willing to have lived to promote religion at that time, if that had been the will of God. But (says he) I am willing it should be as it is: I would not have the choice to make myself for ten thousand worlds.*"

He several times spake of the different kinds of willingness to die: and spoke of it as an ignoble mean kind, to be willing, only to get rid of pain, or to go to heaven only to get honour and advancement there. His own longings for death seemed to be quite of a different kind, and for nobler ends. When he was first taken with something like a diarrhærea, which looked upon as one of the last and most fatal symptoms in a consumption, he said, "O now the glo-

* He writes thus in his diary: "Aug. 23. 1747. In the week past, I had divers turns of inward refreshing. Though my body was inexpressibly weak, followed continually with agues and fevers; sometimes my soul centered in God as my only portion; and I felt I should be for ever unhappy if he did not reign. I saw the sweetness and happiness of being his subject, at his disposal. This made all my difficulties quickly vanish."

rious time is coming? I have longed to serve God perfectly; and God will gratify these desires." And at one time and another, in the latter part of his illness, he uttered these expressions. "My heaven is to please God, and glorify him, and give all to him, and to be wholly devoted to his glory.—That is the heaven I long for; that is my religion; and that is my happiness; and always was, ever since I supposed I had any true religion: And all those that are of that religion, shall meet me in heaven. I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honour to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low seat there, but to love, and please, and glorify God. If I had a thousand souls, if they were worth any thing, I would give them all to God: But I have nothing to give, when all is done. It is impossible for any rational creature to be happy without acting all for God. God himself could not make me happy any other way.—I long to be in heaven, praising and glorifying God with the holy angels; all my desire is to glorify God.—My heart goes out to the burying-place, it seems to me a desirable place: But O to glorify God! That is it! That is above all! —It is a great comfort to me to think that I have done a little for God in the world: It is but a very small matter; yet I have done a little; and I lament it, that I have not done more for him.—There is nothing in the world worth living for, but doing good, and finishing God's work, doing the work that Christ did. I see nothing else in the world that can yield any satisfaction, besides living to God, pleasing him, and doing his whole will. My greatest joy and comfort has been to do something for promoting the interest of religion, and the souls of particular persons." *

* In his diary he writes thus: "Sept. 7. 1747. When I was in great distress of body, my soul desired that God should be glorified. I saw there was no heaven but this. I could not but speak to the by-standers then of the only happiness, viz. pleasing God. O that I could for ever live to God! The day, I trust, is at hand, the perfect day! O, the day of deliverance from all sin!

"Sept. 19. Near night, while I attempted to walk a little, my thoughts turned thus: How infinitely sweet it is to love God, and be all for him! Upon which it was suggested to me, 'You are not an angel, not lively and active.' To which my whole soul immediately replied, 'I as sincerely desire to love and glorify God as any angel in heaven.' Upon which it was suggested again, 'But you are filthy, not fit for heaven.' Hereupon instantly appeared the blessed robe of Christ's righteousness, which I could not but exult and triumph in. I viewed the infinite excellency of God; and my soul even broke with longings, that God should be glorified. I thought of dignity in heaven: But instantly the thought returned, I do not go to heaven to get honour, but to give all possible glory and

After he came to be in so low a state, that he ceased to have the least expectation of recovery, his mind was peculiarly carried forth with earnest concern for the prosperity of the church of God on earth; which seemed very manifestly to arise from a pure disinterested love to Christ, and desire of his glory. The prosperity of Zion, was a theme he dwelt much upon, and of which he spake much; and more and more, the nearer death approached. He told me when near his end, that "he never, in all his life, had his mind so led forth in desires and earnest prayers for the flourishing of Christ's kingdom on earth, as since he was brought so exceeding low at Boston." He seemed much to wonder, that there appeared no more disposition in ministers and people, to pray for the flourishing of religion through the world. And particularly, he several times expressed his wonder, that there appeared no more forwardness to comply with the proposal lately made from Scotland, for united extraordinary prayer among God's people, for the coming of Christ's kingdom, and sent it as his dying advice to his own congregation, that they should practise agreeably to that proposal.*

A little before his death, he said to me, as I came into the room, "My thoughts have been employed on the old dear theme, the prosperity of God's church on earth. As I waked out of sleep (said he) I was led to cry for the pouring out of God's Spirit, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, which the dear Redeemer did and suffered so much for: It is that especially makes me long for it."—But a few days before

praise. O, how I longed that God should be glorified on earth also! O, I was made for eternity, if God might be glorified! Bodily pains I cared not for; though I was then in extremity, I never felt easier; I felt willing to glorify God in that state of bodily distress, as long as he pleased I should continue so. The grave appeared really sweet, and I longed to lodge my weary bones in it: But, O! that God might be glorified! This was the burden of all my cry. O, I knew I should be active as an angel in heaven, and that I should be stripped of my filthy garments! So that there was no objection. But, O, to love and praise God more, to please him for ever! This my soul panted after, and even now pants for, while I write. O, that God may be glorified in the whole earth! Lord, let thy kingdom come. I longed for a spirit of preaching to descend and rest on ministers, that they might address the consciences of men with closeness and power. I saw God had the residue of the Spirit; and my soul longed it should be poured out from on high. I could not but plead with God for my dear congregation, that he would preserve it, and not suffer his great name to lose its glory in that work; my soul still longing, that God might be glorified."

* See Vol. II. p. 444, &c.

his death, he desired us to sing a psalm concerning the prosperity of Zion; which he signified his mind was engaged in above all things; and at his desire we sang a part of the 102d psalm. And when we had done, though he was then so low that he could scarcely speak, he so exerted himself, that he made a prayer, very audibly, wherein, besides praying for those present, and for his own congregation, he earnestly prayed for the reviving and flourishing of religion in the world. His own congregation especially lay much on his heart. He often spake of them; and commonly when he did so, it was with extraordinary tenderness; so that his speech was interrupted and drowned with weeping.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent something of the character and behaviour of that excellent servant of Christ, whose funeral is now to be attended. Though I have done it very imperfectly; yet I have endeavoured to do it faithfully, and as in the presence and fear of God, without flattery; which surely is to be abhorred in ministers of the gospel, when speaking as messengers of the Lord of hosts. Such reason have we to be satisfied that the person spoken of, now he is absent from the body, is present with the Lord; and now wearing a crown of glory, of distinguished brightness.

And how much is there in the consideration of such an example, and so blessed an end, to excite us, who are yet alive, with the greatest diligence and earnestness, to improve the time of life, that we also may go to be with Christ, when we forsake the body? The time is coming, and will soon come, we know not how soon, when we must take leave of all things here below, to enter on a fixed unalterable state in the eternal world. O, how well is it worth the while to labour and suffer, and deny ourselves, to lay up in store a good foundation of support and supply, against that time! How much is such a peace as we have heard of, worth at such a time? And how dismal would it be, to be in such circumstances, under the outward distresses of a consuming, dissolving frame, and looking death in the face from day to day, with hearts uncleansed, and sin unpardoned, under a dreadful load of guilt and divine wrath, having much sorrow and wrath in our sickness, and nothing to comfort and support our minds; nothing before us but a speedy appearance before the judgment seat of an almighty, infinitely holy, and angry God, and an endless eternity in suffering his wrath without mercy! The person we have been speaking of, had a great sense of

this. He said, not long before his death. "It is sweet to me to think of eternity: The endlessness of it makes it sweet. But, Oh, what shall I say to the eternity of the wicked! I cannot mention it, nor think of it!—The thought is too dreadful!" At another time, speaking of a heart devoted to God and his glory, he said, "O of what importance is it to have such a frame of mind, such a heart as this, when we come to die! It is this now that gives me peace."

How much is there, in particular, in the things that have been observed of this eminent minister of Christ, to excite us, who are called to the same great work of the gospel-ministry, to earnest care and endeavours, that we may be in like manner faithful in our work; that we may be filled with the same spirit, animated with the like pure and fervent flame of love to God, and the like earnest concern to advance the kingdom and glory of our Lord and Master, and the prosperity of Zion? How amiable did these principles render this servant of Christ in his life, and how blessed in his end? The time will soon come, when we also must leave our earthly tabernacles, and go to our Lord that sent us to labour in his harvest, to render an account of ourselves to him. O how does it concern us so to run as not uncertainly; so to fight, not as those that beat the air? And should not what we have heard excite us to depend on God for his help and assistance in our great work, and to be much in seeking the influences of his Spirit, and success in our labours, by fasting and prayer; in which the person spoken of was abundant? This practice he earnestly recommended on his death bed, from his own experience of its great benefits, to some candidates for the ministry that stood by his bedside. He was often speaking of the great need ministers have of much of the Spirit of Christ in their work, and how little good they are like to do without it; and how, "when ministers were under the special influences of the Spirit of God, it assisted them to come at the consciences of men, and (as he expressed it) as it were to handle them with hands: whereas, without the Spirit of God, said he, whatever reason and oratory we make use of, we do but make use of stumps, instead of hands."

Oh that the things that were seen and heard in this extraordinary person, his holiness, heavenliness, labour and self-denial in life, his so remarkably devoting himself and his all, in heart and practice, to the glory of God, and the wonderful frame of mind manifested in so stedfast a manner, under the

expectation of death, and the pains and agonies that brought it on, may excite in us all, both ministers and people, a due sense of the greatness of the work we have to do in the world, the excellency and amiableness of thorough religion in experience and practice, and the blessedness of the end of such a life, and the infinite value of their eternal reward, when absent from the body and present with the Lord; and effectually stir us up to endeavours that in the way of such a holy life, we may at last come to so blessed an end.—*Amen.*

SERMON IV.*

GOD'S AWFUL JUDGMENT IN THE BREAKING AND WITHERING
OF THE STRONG RODS OF A COMMUNITY.

Ezek. xix. 12.

Her strong Rods were broken and withered.

IN order to a right understanding and improvement of these words, these four things must be observed concerning them.

1. Who she is that is here represented as having had strong rods, viz. the Jewish community, who here, as often elsewhere, is called the people's mother. She is here compared to a vine planted in a very fruitful soil, verse 10. The Jewish church and state is often elsewhere compared to a vine; as Psalm lxxx. 8, &c. Isa. v. 2. Jer. ii. 21. Ezek. xv. and chap. xvii. 6.

2. What is meant by her strong rods, viz. her wise, able, and well qualified magistrates or rulers. That the rulers or magistrates are intended is manifest by verse 11. "And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bear rule." And by rods that were strong, must be meant such rulers as were well qualified for magistracy, such as had great abilities and other qualifications fitting them for the business of rule. They

* Preached at Northampton on the Lord's day, June 26. 1748, on the death of the Honourable John Stoddard, Esq. often a member of his Majesty's council, for many years chief justice of the court of Common Pleas for the county of Hampshire, judge of the probate of wills, and chief colonel of the regiment, &c. who died at Boston, June 19, 1748, in the 67th year of his age.

were wont to chuse a rod or staff of the strongest and hardest sort of wood that could be found, for the mace or sceptre of a prince; such an one only being counted fit for that use; and this generally was overlaid with gold.

It is very remarkable that such a strong rod should grow out of a weak vine: but so it had been in Israel, through God's extraordinary blessing, in times past. Though the nation is spoken of here, and frequently elsewhere, as weak and helpless in itself, and entirely dependent as a vine, the weakest of all trees, that cannot support itself by its own strength, and never stands but as it leans on or hangs by something else that is stronger than itself; yet God had caused many of her sons to be strong rods fit for sceptres; he had raised up in Israel many able and excellent princes and magistrates, who had done worthily in their day.

3. It should be understood and observed what is meant by these strong rods being broken and withered, viz. these able and excellent rulers being removed by death: men's dying is often compared in Scripture to the withering of the growth of the earth.

4. It should be observed after what manner the breaking and withering of these strong rods is here spoken of, viz. as a great and awful calamity, that God had brought upon that people: it is spoken of as one of the chief effects of God's dreadful displeasure against them; "But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered, the fire hath consumed them." The great benefits she enjoyed while her strong rods remained, are represented in the preceding verse; "And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bear rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches; and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches." And the terrible calamities that attended the breaking and withering of her strong rods, are represented in the two verses next following the text; "And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground. And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit." And in the conclusion in the next words, is very emphatically declared the worthiness of such a dispensation to be greatly lamented; "So that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule: this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation."

That which I therefore observe from the words of the text, to be the subject of discourse at this time, is this, viz. When

God by death removes from a people those in place of public authority and rule that have been as strong rods, it is an awful judgment of God on that people, and worthy of great lamentation.

In discoursing on this proposition, I would,

1. Shew what kind of rulers may fitly be called strong rods.

2. Shew why the removal of such rulers from a people by death is to be looked upon as an awful judgment of God on that people, and is greatly to be lamented.

I. I would observe what qualifications of those who are in public authority and rule may properly give them the denomination of strong rods.

1. One qualification of rulers whence they may properly be denominated strong rods, is great ability for the management of public affairs. This is the case, when they who stand in a place of public authority are men of great natural abilities, men of uncommon strength of reason and largeness of understanding; especially when they have remarkably a genius for government, a peculiar turn of mind fitting them to gain an extraordinary understanding in things of that nature. They have ability, in an especial manner, for insight into the mysteries of government, and for discerning those things wherein the public welfare or calamity consists, and the proper means to avoid the one and promote the other; an extraordinary talent at distinguishing what is right and just, from that which is wrong and unequal, and to see through the false colours with which injustice is often disguised, and unravel the false and subtle arguments and cunning sophistry that is often made use of to defend iniquity. They have not only great natural abilities in these respects, but their abilities and talents have been improved by study, learning, observation, and experience; and by these means they have obtained great actual knowledge. They have acquired great skill in public affairs, and things requisite to be known in order to their wise, prudent, and effectual management; they have obtained a great understanding of men and things, a great knowledge of human nature, and of the way of accommodating themselves to it, so as most effectually to influence it to wise purposes. They have obtained a very extensive knowledge of men with whom they are concerned in the management of public affairs, either those who have a joint concern in government, or those who

are to be governed ; and they have also obtained a very full and particular understanding of the state and circumstances of the country or people of whom they have the care, and know well their laws and constitution, and what their circumstances require ; and likewise have a great knowledge of the people of neighbouring nations, states, or provinces, with whom they have occasion to be concerned in the management of public affairs committed to them. These things all contribute to render those who are in authority fit to be denominated strong rods."

2. When they have not only great understanding, but largeness of heart, and a greatness and nobleness of disposition, this is another qualification that belongs to the character of a "strong rod."

Those that are by divine Providence set in a place of public authority and rule, are called "gods, and sons of the Most High," Psalm lxxxii. 6. And therefore it is peculiarly unbecoming them to be of a mean spirit, a disposition that will admit of their doing those things that are sordid and vile ; as when they are persons of a narrow, private spirit, that may be found in little tricks and intrigues to promote their private interest. Such will shamefully defile their hands to gain a few pounds, are not ashamed to grind the faces of the poor, and screw their neighbours ; and will take advantage of their authority or commission to line their own pockets with what is fraudulently taken or withheld from others. When a man in authority is of such a mean spirit, it weakens his authority, and makes him justly contemptible in the eyes of men, and is utterly inconsistent with his being a strong rod.

But on the contrary, it greatly establishes his authority, and causes others to stand in awe of him, when they see him to be a man of greatness of mind, one that abhors those things that are mean and sordid, and not capable of a compliance with them : one that is of a public spirit, and not of a private narrow disposition ; a man of honour, and not of mean artifice and clandestine management, for filthy lucre ; one that abhors trifling and impertinence, or to waste away his time, that should be spent in the service of God, his king, or his country, in vain amusements and diversions, and in the pursuit of the gratifications of sensual appetites. God charges the rulers in Israel, that pretended to be their great and mighty men, with being mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. There does not seem to be any reference to their being men of strong heads, and able to bear a great deal

of strong drink, as some have supposed; there is a severe sarcasm in the words; for the prophet is speaking of the great men, princes, and judges in Israel (as appears by the verse next following), which should be mighty men, strong rods, men of eminent qualifications, excelling in nobleness of spirit, of glorious strength and fortitude of mind; but instead of that, they were mighty or eminent for nothing but gluttony and drunkenness.

3. When those that are in authority are endowed with much of a spirit of government, this is another thing that intitles them to the denomination of "strong rods." They not only are men of great understanding and wisdom in affairs that appertain to government, but have also a peculiar talent at using their knowledge, and exerting themselves in this great and important business, according to their great understanding in it. They are men of eminent fortitude, and are not afraid of the faces of men, are not afraid to do the part that properly belongs to them as rulers, though they meet with great opposition, and the spirits of men are greatly irritated by it. They have a spirit of resolution and activity, so as to keep the wheels of government in proper motion, and to cause judgment and justice to run down as a mighty stream; they have not only a great knowledge of government, and the things that belong to it in theory, but it is, as it were, natural to them to apply the various powers and faculties with which God has endowed them, and the knowledge they have obtained by study and observation, to that business, so as to perform it most advantageously and effectually.

4. Stability and firmness of integrity, fidelity, and piety, in the exercise of authority, is another thing that greatly contributes to, and is very essential in the character of a strong rod."

He is not only a man of strong reason and great discerning to know what is just, but is a man of strict integrity and righteousness, firm and immoveable in the execution of justice and judgment. He is not only a man of great ability to bear down vice and immorality, but has a disposition agreeable to such ability; is one that has a strong aversion to wickedness, and is disposed to use the power God has put into his hands to suppress it; and is one that not only opposes vice by his authority, but by his example. He is one of inflexible fidelity, who will be faithful to God whose minister he is, to his people for good, and who is immoveable in his regard to his supreme authority, his commands and his glory; and will be faithful to

his king and country. He will not be induced by the many temptations that attend the business of men in public authority, basely to betray his trust; will not consent to do what he thinks not to be for the public good, for his own gain or advancement, or any private interest. He is well principled, and firm in acting agreeably to his principles, and will not be prevailed with to do otherwise through fear or favour, to follow a multitude, or to maintain his interest in any on whom he depends for the honour or profit of his place, whether it be prince or people; and is also one of that strength of mind, whereby he rules his own spirit. These things very eminently contribute to a ruler's title to the denomination of a "strong rod."

5. And *lastly*, It also contributes to that strength of a man in authority by which he may be denominated a "strong rod," when he is in such circumstances as give him advantage for the exercise of his strength for the public good; as his being a person of honourable descent, of a distinguished education, a man of estate, one advanced in years, one that has long been in authority, so that it is become as it were natural for the people to pay him deference, to reverence him, to be influenced and governed by him, and to submit to his authority; and add to this, his being extensively known, and much honoured and regarded abroad; his being one of a good presence, majesty of countenance, decency of behaviour, becoming one in authority; of forcible speech, &c. These things add to his strength, and increase his ability and advantage to serve his generation in the place of a ruler, and therefore serve to render him one that is the more fitly and eminently called a "strong rod."—I now proceed,

II. To shew that when such strong rods are broken and withered by death, it is an awful judgment of God on the people who are deprived of them, and worthy of great lamentation.—And that on two accounts,

1. By reason of the many positive benefits and blessings to a people that such rulers are the instruments of.

Almost all the prosperity of a public society and civil community does, under God, depend on their rulers. They are like the main springs or wheels in a machine, that keep every part in its due motion, and are in the body politic, as the vitals in the body natural, and as the pillars and foundation in a building. Civil rulers are called "the foundations of the earth." Psal. lxxxii. 5. and xi. 3.

The prosperity of a people depends more on their rulers than is commonly imagined. As they have the public society under their care and power, so they have advantage to promote the public interest every way; and if they are such rulers as have been described, they are some of the greatest blessings to the public. Their influence has a tendency to promote wealth, and cause temporal possessions and blessings to abound; and to promote virtue amongst them, and so to unite them one to another in peace and mutual benevolence, and make them happy in society, each one the instrument of his neighbour's quietness, comfort, and prosperity; and by these means to advance their reputation and honour in the world; and which is much more, to promote their spiritual and eternal happiness. Therefore, the wise man says, Eccles. x. 17. "Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles."

We have a remarkable instance and evidence of the happy and great influence of such a strong rod as has been described, to promote the universal prosperity of a people, in the history of the reign of Solomon, though many of the people were uneasy under his government, and thought him too rigorous in his administrations: See 1 Kings xii. 4. "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon," 1 Kings. iv. 25. "And he made silver to be among them as stones for abundance," chap. x. 27. "And Judah and Israel were many, eating and drinking and making merr-y." The queen of Sheba admired, and was greatly affected with the happiness of the people, under the government of such a strong rod, 1 Kings x. 8, 9. "Happy are thy men, (says she) happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice."

The flourishing state of the kingdom of Judah, while they had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bare rule, is taken notice of in our context; "her stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches."

Such rulers are eminently the ministers of God to his people for good: they are great gifts of the Most High to a people, blessed tokens of his favour, and vehicles of his goodness to them; and therein are images of his own Son, the

grand medium of all God's goodness to fallen mankind; and therefore, all of them are called, sons of the Most High. All civil rulers, if they are as they ought to be, such strong rods as have been described, will be like the Son of the Most High, vehicles of good to mankind, and like him, will be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain. And therefore, when a people are bereaved of them, they sustain an unspeakable loss, and are the subjects of a judgment of God that is greatly to be lamented.

2. On account of the great calamities such rulers are a defence from. Innumerable are the grievous and fatal calamities which public societies are exposed to in this evil world, from which they can have no defence without order and authority. If a people are without government, they are like a city broken down and without walls, encompassed on every side by enemies, and become unavoidably subject to all manner of confusion and misery.

Government is necessary to defend communities from miseries from within themselves; from the prevalence of intestine discord, mutual injustice, and violence; the members of the society continually making a prey one of another, without any defence from each other. Rulers are the heads of union in public societies, that hold the parts together; without which nothing else is to be expected than that the members of the society will be continually divided against themselves, every one acting the part of an enemy to his neighbour, every one's hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; going on in remediless and endless broils and jarring, until the society be utterly dissolved and broken in pieces, and life itself, in the neighbourhood of our fellow-creatures, becomes miserable and intolerable.

We may see the need of government in societies by what is visible in families, those lesser societies, of which all public societies are constituted. How miserable would these little societies be, if all were left to themselves, without any authority or superiority in one above another, or any head of union and influence among them? We may be convinced by what we see of the lamentable consequences of the want of a proper exercise of authority and maintenance of government in families, which yet are not absolutely without all authority. No less need is there of government in public societies, but much more, as they are larger, a very few may possibly,

without any government, act by concert, so as to concur in what shall be for the welfare of the whole ; but this is not to be expected among a multitude, constituted of many thousands, of a great variety of tempers and different interests.

As government is absolutely necessary, so there is a necessity of strong rods in order to it : the business being such as requires persons so qualified ; no other being sufficient for, or well capable of the government of public societies : and therefore, those public societies are miserable that have not such strong rods for sceptres to rule, Eccles. x. 16. “Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child.”

As government, and strong rods for the exercise of it, are necessary to preserve public societies from dreadful and fatal calamities arising from among themselves ; so no less requisite are they to defend the community from foreign enemies. As they are like the pillars of a building, so they are also like the walls and bulwarks of a city : they are under God the main strength of a people in the time of war, and the chief instruments of their preservation, safety, and rest. This is signified in a very lively manner in the words that are used by the Jewish community in her lamentations, to express the expectations she had from her princes, Lam. iv. 20. “The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.” In this respect also such strong rods are sons of the Most High, and images or resemblances of the Son of God, viz. as they are their saviours from their enemies ; as the judges that God raised up of old in Israel are called, Neh. ix. 27. “Therefore thou deliverest them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them : and in the time of their trouble when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven ; and according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.”

Thus both the prosperity and safety of a people under God, depends on such rulers as are *strong rods*. While they enjoy such blessings, they are wont to be like a vine planted in a fruitful soil, with her stature exalted among the thick branches, appearing in her height with the multitude of her branches ; but when they have no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule, they are like a vine planted in a wilderness that is exposed to be plucked up, and cast down to the ground, to

have her fruit dried up with the east wind, and to have fire coming out of her own branches to devour her fruit.

On these accounts, when a people's strong rods are broken and withered, it is an awful judgment of God on that people, and worthy of great lamentation: As when King Josiah (who was doubtless one of the strong rods referred to in the text) was dead, the people made great lamentation for him, 2 Chron. xxxv. 24, 25. "And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers: and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and all the singing-men and the singing-women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and behold, they are written in the lamentations."

APPLICATION.

I come now to apply these things to our own case, under the late awful frown of divine Providence upon us, in removing by death that honourable person in public rule and authority, an inhabitant of this town, and belonging to this congregation and church, who died at Boston the last Lord's day.

He was eminently a strong rod in the fore-mentioned respects. As to his natural abilities, strength of reason, greatness and clearness of discerning, and depth of penetration, he was one of the first rank. It may be doubted whether he has left his superior in these respects in these parts of the world. He was a man of a truly great genius, and his genius was peculiarly fitted for the understanding and managing of public affairs.

And as his natural capacity was great, so was the knowledge that he had acquired, his understanding being greatly improved by close application of mind to those things he was called to be concerned in, and by a very exact observation of them, and long experience in them. He had indeed a great insight into the nature of public societies, the mysteries of government, and the affairs of peace and war. He had a discernment that very few have of the things wherein the public weal consists, and what those things are that expose public societies; and of the proper means to avoid the latter, and promote the former. He was quick in his discerning, in that in most cases, especially such as belonged to his proper busi-

ness, he at first sight would see further than most men when they had done their best ; but yet he had a wonderful faculty of improving his own thoughts by meditation, and carrying his views a greater and greater length by long and close application of mind. He had an extraordinary ability to distinguish right and wrong, in the midst of intricacies and circumstances that tended to perplex and darken the case. He was able to weigh things as is were in a balance, and to distinguish those things that were solid and weighty from those that had only a fair shew without substance ; which he evidently discovered in his accurate, clear, and plain way of stating and committing causes to a jury, from the bench, as by others hath been observed. He wonderfully distinguished truth from falsehood, and the most laboured cases seemed always to lie clear in his mind, his ideas properly ranged ; and he had a talent of communicating them to every one's understanding, beyond almost any one, and if any were misguided, it was not because truth and falsehood, right and wrong, were not well distinguished.

He was probably one of the ablest politicians that ever New-England bred. He had a very uncommon insight into human nature, and a marvellous ability to penetrate into the particular tempers and dispositions of such as he had to deal with, and to discern the fittest way of treating them, so as most effectually to influence them to any good and wise purpose.

And never perhaps was there a person that had a more extensive and thorough knowledge of the state of this land, and its public affairs, and of persons that were jointly concerned with him in them. He knew this people, and their circumstances, and what their circumstances required. He discerned the diseases of this body, and what were the proper remedies, as an able and masterly physician. He had a great acquaintance with the neighbouring colonies, and also the nations on this continent, with whom we are concerned in our public affairs. He had a far greater knowledge than any other person in the land, of the several nations of Indians in these northern parts of America, their tempers, manners, and the proper way of treating them ; and was more extensively known by them than any other person in the country. And no other person in authority in this province had such an acquaintance with the people and country of Canada, the land of our enemies, as he had.

He was exceeding far from a disposition and forwardness

to intermeddle with other people's business; but as to what belonged to his proper business, in the offices he sustained, and the important affairs of which he had the care, he had a great understanding of what belonged to them. I have often been surprised at the length of his reach, and what I have seen of his ability to foresee and determine the consequences of things, even at a great distance, and quite beyond the sight of other men. He was not wavering and unsteady in his opinion. His manner was never to pass a judgment rashly, but was wont first thoroughly to deliberate and weigh an affair; and in this, notwithstanding his great abilities, he was glad to improve by the help of conversation and discourse with others, (and often spake of the great advantage he found by it); but when, on mature consideration, he had settled his judgment, he was not easily turned from it by false colours, and plausible pretences and appearances.

And besides his knowledge of things belonging to his particular calling as a ruler, he had also a great degree of understanding in things belonging to his general calling as a Christian. He was no inconsiderable divine, He was a wise casuist, as I know by the great help I have found from time to time by his judgment and advice in cases of conscience, wherein I have consulted him. And indeed I scarce knew the divine that I ever found more able to help and enlighten the mind in such cases than he. And he had no small degree of knowledge in things pertaining to experimental religion; but was wont to discourse on such subjects, not only with accurate doctrinal distinctions, but as one intimately and feelingly acquainted with these things.

He was not only great in speculative knowledge, but his knowledge was practical; such as tended to a wise conduct in the affairs, business, and duties of life; so as properly to have the denomination of wisdom, and so as properly and eminently to invest him with the character of a wise man. And he was not only eminently wise and prudent in his own conduct, but was one of the ablest and wisest counsellors of others in any difficult affair.

The greatness and honourableness of his disposition was answerable to the largeness of his understanding. He was naturally of a great mind; in this respect he was truly the son of nobles. He greatly abhorred things which were mean and sordid, and seemed to be incapable of a compliance with them. How far was he from trifling and impertinence in his conversation? How far from a busy, meddling disposition? How far from any sly and clandestine management to fill his pockets

with what was fraudulently with-held, or violently squeezed from the labourer, soldier, or inferior officer? How far from taking advantage from his commission or authority, or any superior power he had in his hands; or the ignorance, dependence, or necessities of others, to add to his own gains with what properly belonged to them, and with what they might justly expect as a proper reward for any of their services? How far was he from secretly taking bribes offered to induce him to favour any man in his cause, or by his power or interest to promote his being advanced to any place of public trust, honour, or profit? How greatly did he abhor lying and prevarication? And how immoveably stedfast was he to exact truth? His hatred of those things that were mean and sordid was so apparent and well known, that it was evident that men dreaded to appear in any thing of that nature in his presence.

He was a man of a remarkably public spirit, a true lover of his country, and who greatly abhorred sacrificing the public welfare to private interest.—He was very eminently endowed with a spirit of government. The God of nature seemed to have formed him for government, as though he had been made on purpose, and cast into a mould, by which he should be every way fitted for the business of a man in public authority. Such a behaviour and conduct was natural to him, as tended to maintain his authority, and possess others with awe and reverence, and to enforce and render effectual what he said and did in the exercise of his authority. He did not bear the sword in vain: He was truly a terror to evil-doers. What I saw in him often put me in mind of that saying of the wise man, Prov. xx. 8. “The king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.” He was one that was not afraid of the faces of men; and every one knew that it was in vain to attempt to deter him from doing what, on mature consideration, he had determined he ought to do.—Every thing in him was great, and becoming a man in his public station. Perhaps never was there a man that appeared in New-England to whom the denomination of a *great man* did more properly belong.

But though he was one that was great among men, exalted above others in abilities and greatness of mind, and in the place of rule, and feared not the faces of men, yet he feared God. He was strictly conscientious in his conduct, both in public and private. I never knew the man that seemed more stedfastly and immoveably to act by principle, and

according to rules and maxims, established and settled in his mind by the dictates of his judgment and conscience. He was a man of strict justice and fidelity. Faithfulness was eminently his character. Some of his greatest opponents that have been of the contrary party to him in public affairs, yet have openly acknowledged this of him, That he was a faithful man. He was remarkably faithful in his public trusts. He would not basely betray his trust, from fear or favour. It was in vain to expect it; however men might oppose him or neglect him, and how great soever they were: Nor would he neglect the public interest committed to him, for the sake of his own ease, but diligently and laboriously watched and laboured for it night and day. And he was faithful in private affairs as well as public. He was a most faithful friend; faithful to any one that in any case asked his counsel: and his fidelity might be depended upon in whatever affair he undertook for any of his neighbours.

He was a noted instance of the virtue of temperance, unalterable in it, in all places, in all companies, and in the midst of all temptations. Though he was a man of a great spirit, yet he had a remarkable government of his spirit; and excelled in the government of his tongue. In the midst of all provocations from multitudes he had to deal with, and the great multiplicity of perplexing affairs in which he was concerned, and all the opposition and reproaches of which he was at any time the subject; yet what was there that ever proceeded out of his mouth that his enemies could lay hold of? No profane language, no vain, rash, unseemly, and unchristian speeches. If at any time he expressed himself with great warmth and vigour, it seemed to be from principle and determination of judgment, rather than from passion. When he expressed himself strongly, and with vehemence, those that were acquainted with him, and well observed him from time to time, might evidently see it was done in consequence of thought and judgment, weighing the circumstances and consequences of things.

The calmness and steadiness of his behaviour in private, particularly in his family, appeared remarkable and exemplary to those who had most opportunity to observe. He was thoroughly established in those religious principles and doctrines of the first fathers of New-England, usually called the *doctrines of grace*, and had a great detestation of the opposite errors of the present fashionable divinity, as very contrary to the word of God, and the experience of every true Christian.

And as he was a friend to truth, so he was a friend to vital piety and the power of godliness, and ever countenanced and favoured it on all occasions.

He abhorred profaneness, and was a person of a serious and decent spirit, and ever treated sacred things with reverence. He was exemplary for his decent attendance on the public worship of God. Who ever saw him irreverently and indecently lolling, and laying down his head to sleep, or gazing about the meeting-house in time of divine service? And as he was able (as was before observed) to discourse very understandingly of experimental religion, so to some persons with whom he was very intimate, he gave intimations sufficiently plain, while conversing of these things, that they were matters of his own experience. And some serious persons in civil authority, who have ordinarily differed from him in matters of government, yet on some occasional close conversation with him on things of religion, have manifested a high opinion of him as to real experimental piety.

As he was known to be a serious person, and an enemy to a profane or vain conversation, so he was feared on that account by great and small. When he was in the room, only his presence was sufficient to maintain decency; though many were there accounted great men, who otherwise were disposed to take a much greater freedom in their talk and behaviour, than they dared to do in his presence. He was not unmindful of death, nor insensible of his own frailty, nor did death come unexpected to him. For some years past, he has spoken much to some persons of dying, and going into the eternal world, signifying that he did not expect to continue long here.

Added to all these things, to render him eminently a *strong rod* he was attended with many circumstances which tended to give him advantage for the exerting of his strength for the public good. He was honourably descended, was a man of considerable substance, had been long in authority, was extensively known and honoured abroad, was high in the esteem of the many tribes of Indians in the neighbourhood of the British colonies, and so had great influence upon them above any other man in New-England. God had endowed him with a comely presence, and majesty of countenance, becoming the great qualities of his mind, and the place in which God had set him.

In the exercise of these qualities and endowments, under these advantages, he has been as it were a father to this part of the land, on whom the whole county, had under God, its

dependence in all its public affairs, and especially since the beginning of the present war. How much the weight of all the warlike concerns of the country (which above any part of the land lies exposed to the enemy) has lain on his shoulders, and how he has been the spring of all motion, and the doer of every thing that has been done, and how wisely and faithfully he has conducted these affairs, I need not inform this congregation. You well know that he took care of the county as a father of a family of children, not neglecting men's lives, and making light of their blood; but with great diligence, vigilance and prudence, applying himself continually to the proper means of our safety and welfare. And especially has this his native town, where he has dwelt from his infancy, reaped the benefit of his happy influence. His wisdom has been, under God, very much our guide, and his authority our support and strength, and he has been a great honour to Northampton, and ornament to our church. He continued in full capacity of usefulness while he lived; he was indeed considerably advanced in years, but his powers of mind were not sensibly abated, and his strength of body was not so impaired, but that he was able to go long journeys, in extreme heat and cold, and in a short time.

But now this "strong rod is broken and withered," and surely the judgment of God therein is very awful, and the dispensation that which may well be for a lamentation. Probably we shall be more sensible of the worth and importance of such a strong rod by the want of it. The awful voice of God in this providence is worthy to be attended to by this whole province, and especially by the people of this county, but in a more peculiar manner by us of this town. We have now this testimony of the divine displeasure, added to all the other dark clouds God has lately brought over us, and his awful frowns upon us. It is a dispensation, on many accounts, greatly calling for our humiliation and fear before God; an awful manifestation of his supreme, universal, and absolute dominion, calling us to adore the divine sovereignty, and tremble at the presence of this great God. And it is a lively instance of human frailty and mortality. We see how that none are out of the reach of death, that no greatness, no authority, no wisdom and sagacity, no honourableness of person or station, no degree of valuableness and importance, exempts from the stroke of death. This is therefore a loud and solemn warning to all sorts to prepare for their departure hence.

And the memory of this person who is now gone, who was made so great a blessing while he lived, should engage us to shew respect and kindness to his family. This we should do both out of respect to him and to his father, your former eminent pastor, who in his day was in a remarkable manner a father to this part of the land in spirituals, and especially to this town, as this his son has been in temporals.—God greatly resented it, when the children of Israel did not shew kindness to the house of Jerubbaal that had been made an instrument of so much good to them, Judges viii. 35. “Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, according to all the good which he had shewed unto Israel.”

SERMON V.*

TRUE GRACE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF
DEVILS.

JAMES ii. 19.

*Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well: the
devils also believe, and tremble.*

OBERVE in these words. 1. Something that some depended on, as an evidence of their good estate and acceptance, as the objects of God's favour, viz. a speculative faith, or belief of the doctrines of religion. The great doctrine of the existence of one only God is particularly mentioned; probably, because this was a doctrine wherein, especially, there was a visible and noted distinction between professing Christians and the heathens, amongst whom the Christians in those days were dispersed. And therefore, this was what many trusted in, as what recommended them to, or at least was an evidence of their interest in; the great spiritual and eternal privileges, in which real Christians were distinguished from the rest of the world.

2. How much is allowed concerning this faith, viz. That it is a good attainment; "Thou dost well." It was good, as it was necessary. This doctrine was one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; and, in some respects, above all others fundamental. It was necessary to be believed, in order to salvation. To be without the belief of this doctrine, espe-

* Preached before the Synod of New York, convened at New-Ark, in New Jersey, on September 28, N. S. 1752.

cially in those that had such advantage to know as they had to whom the Apostle wrote, would be a great sin, and what would vastly aggravate their damnation. This belief was also good, as it had a good tendency in many respects.

3. What is implicitly denied concerning it, viz, That it is any evidence of a person's being in a state of salvation. The whole context shews this to be the design of the Apostle in the words. And it is particularly manifest by the conclusion of the verse; which is the

4. Thing observable in the words, viz. The argument by which the Apostle proves, that this is no sign of a state of grace, viz. that it is found in the devils. They believe that there is one God, and that he is a holy, sin-hating God; and that he is a God of truth, and will fulfil his threatenings, by which he has denounced future judgments, and a great increase of misery on them; and that he is an almighty God, and able to execute his threatened vengeance upon them.

Therefore, the doctrine I infer from the words to make the subject of my present discourse, is this, viz. Nothing in the mind of man, that is of the same nature with what the devils experience, or are the subjects of, is any sure sign of saving grace.

If there be any thing that the devils have, or find in themselves, which is an evidence of the saving grace of the Spirit of God, then the Apostle's argument is not good; which is plainly this: "That which is in the devils, or which they do, is no certain evidence of grace. But the devils believe that there is one God. Therefore, thy believing that there is one God, is no sure evidence that thou art gracious" So that the whole foundation of the Apostle's argument lies in that proposition: "That which is in the devils, is no certain sign of grace."—Nevertheless, I shall mention two or three further reasons, or arguments of the truth of this doctrine.

I. The devils have no degree of holiness: And therefore those things which are nothing beyond what they are the subjects of, cannot be holy experiences.

The devil once was holy; but when he fell, he lost all his holiness, and became perfectly wicked. He is the greatest sinner, and in some sense the father of all sin. John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: He was a murderer from the beginning, and

abode not in the truth, because there was no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." 1 John iii. 8. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." He is often spoken of, as by way of eminence, for the wicked one." So, Matth. xiii. 19. "Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." Verse 38. "The tares are the children of the wicked one." 1 John ii. 13. "I write unto you young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one." Chap. iii. 12. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one." Chap. v. 18. "Whosoever is born of God—keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." So the devils are called evil spirits, unclean spirits, powers of darkness, rulers of the darkness of this world, and wickedness itself. Eph. vi. 12. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Therefore, surely, those things which the minds of devils are the subjects of, can have nothing of the nature of true holiness in them. The knowledge and understanding which they have of the things of God and religion, cannot be of the nature of divine and holy light, nor any knowledge that is merely of the same kind. No impressions made on their hearts, can be of a spiritual nature. That kind of sense which they have of divine things, however great, cannot be a holy sense. Such affections as move their hearts, however powerful, cannot be holy affections. If there be no holiness in them as they are in the devil, there can be no holiness in them as they are in man; unless something be added to them beyond what is in the devil. And if any thing be added to them, then they are not the same things; but are something beyond what devils are the subjects of; which is contrary to the supposition; for the proposition which I am upon is, that those things which are of the same nature, and nothing beyond what devils are the subjects of, cannot be holy experiences. It is not the subject that makes the affection, or experience, or quality holy; but it is the quality that makes the subject holy.

And if those qualities and experiences which the devils are the subjects of, having nothing of the nature of holiness in them; then they can be no certain signs, that persons which have them are holy or gracious. There is no certain sign of true grace, but those things which are spiritual and gracious. It is God's image that is his seal and mark, the stamp by which

those that are his are known. But that which has nothing of the nature of holiness, has nothing of this image. That which is a sure sign of grace, must either be something which has the nature and essence of grace, or flows from, or someway belongs to its essence: For that which distinguishes things one from another is the essence, or something appertaining to their essence. And therefore, that which is sometimes found wholly without the essence of holiness or grace, can be no essential, sure, or distinguishing mark of grace.

II. The devils are not only absolutely without all true holiness, but they are not so much as the subjects of any common grace.

If any should imagine, that some things may be signs of grace which are not grace itself, or which have nothing of the nature and essence of grace and holiness in them; yet, certainly they will allow, that the qualifications which are sure evidences of grace, must be things that are near akin to grace, or having some remarkable affinity with it. But the devils are not only wholly destitute of any true holiness; but they are at the greatest distance from it, and have nothing in them in any wise akin to it.

There are many in this world who are wholly destitute of saving grace, who yet have common grace. They have no true holiness, but nevertheless have something of that which is called moral virtue; and are the subjects of some degree of the common influences of the Spirit of God. It is so with those in general that live under the light of the gospel, and are not given up to judicial blindness and hardness. Yea, those that are thus given up, yet have some degree of restraining grace while they live in this world; without which the earth could not bear them, and they would in no measure be tolerable members of human society. But when any are damned, or cast into hell, as the devils are, God wholly withdraws his restraining grace, and all merciful influences of his Spirit whatsoever. They have neither saving grace nor common grace; neither the *grace* of the Spirit, nor any of the common *gifts* of the Spirit: neither true holiness, nor moral virtue of any kind. Hence arises the vast increase of the exercise of wickedness in the hearts of men when they are damned. And herein is the chief difference between the damned in hell, and unregenerate and graceless men in this world. Not that wicked men in this world have any more holiness or true virtue than the damned; or have wicked men, when they leave this world, any principles of wickedness in-

fused into them: But when men are cast into hell, God perfectly takes away his Spirit from them, as to all its merciful common influences, and entirely withdraws from them all restraints of his Spirit and good providence.

III. It is unreasonable to suppose, that a person's being in any respect as the devil is, should be a certain sign that he is very unlike and opposite to him, and hereafter shall not have his part with him. True saints are extremely unlike and contrary to the devil, both relatively and really. They are so *relatively*. The devil is the grand rebel; the chief enemy of God and Christ; the object of God's greatest wrath; a condemned malefactor, utterly rejected and cast off by him; for ever shut out of his presence; the prisoner of his justice; an everlasting inhabitant of the infernal world. The saints, on the contrary, are the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem; members of the family of the glorious King of heaven; the children of God; the brethren and spouse of his dear Son; heirs of God; joint heirs with Christ; kings and priests unto God. And they are extremely different *really*. The devil, on account of his hateful nature, and those accursed dispositions which reign in him, is called Satan, the adversary, Abaddon and Apollyon, the great destroyer, the wolf, the roaring lion, the great dragon, the old serpent. The saints are represented as God's holy ones, his anointed ones, the excellent of the earth; the meek of the earth; lambs and doves; Christ's little children; having the image of God, pure in heart; God's jewels; lilies in Christ's garden; plants of paradise; stars of heaven; temples of the living God. The saints, so far as they are saints, are as diverse from the devil, as heaven is from hell; and much more contrary than light is to darkness: and the eternal state that they are appointed to, is answerably diverse and contrary.

Now, it is not reasonable to suppose, that being in any respect as Satan is, or being the subject of any of the same properties, qualifications, affections, or actions, that are in him, is any certain evidence that persons are thus exceeding different from him, and in circumstances so diverse, and appointed to an eternal state so extremely contrary in all respects. Wicked men are in scripture called the children of the devil. Now is it reasonable to suppose, that men's being in any respect as the devil is, can be a certain sign, that they

are not his children, but the children of the infinitely holy and blessed God? We are informed, that wicked men shall hereafter have their part with devils; shall be sentenced to the same everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. Now, can a man's being like the devil in any respect be a sure token that he shall not have his part with him, but with glorious angels, and with Jesus Christ, dwelling with him, where he is, that he may behold and partake of his glory?

IMPROVEMENT.

The *first* use may lie in several inferences, for our *instruction*.

I. From what has been said, it may be inferred, by parity of reason, that nothing that damned men *do*, or ever will *experience*, can be any sure sign of grace.

Damned men are like the devils, are conformed to them in nature and state. They have nothing better in them than the devils, have no higher principles in their hearts; experience nothing, and do nothing of a more excellent kind; as they are the children and servants of the devil; and as such shall dwell with him, and be partakers with him of the same misery. As Christ says, concerning the saints in their future state, Matt. xxii. 30. "That they shall be as the angels of God in heaven:" So it may be said concerning ungodly men in their future state, that they shall be as the fallen, wicked angels in hell.

Each of the fore-mentioned reasons, given to shew the truth of the doctrine with respect to devils, hold good with respect to damned men. Damned men have no degree of holiness; and therefore those things which are nothing beyond what they have, cannot be holy experiences. Damned men are not only absolutely destitute of all true holiness, but they have not so much as any common grace. And lastly, it is unreasonable to suppose, that a person's being in any respect as the damned in hell are, should be a certain sign that they are very unlike and opposite to them, and hereafter shall not have their portion with them.

II. We may hence infer, that no degree of *speculative knowledge* of things of religion is any certain sign of saving grace. The devil, before his fall, was among those bright and glorious angels of heaven, which are represented as morn-

ing stars, and flames of fire, that excel in strength and wisdom. And though he be now become sinful, yet his sin has not abolished the faculties of the angelic nature; as when man fell, he did not lose the faculties of the human nature.— Sin destroys spiritual principles, but not the natural faculties. It is true, sin, when in full dominion, entirely prevents the exercise of the natural faculties in holy and spiritual understanding; and lays many impediments in the way of their proper exercise in other respects. It lays the natural faculty of reason under great disadvantages, by many and strong prejudices; and in fallen men, the faculties of the soul are, doubtless, greatly impeded in their exercise, through that great weakness and disorder of the corporeal organ to which it is strictly united, and which is the consequence of sin.— But there seems to be nothing in the nature of sin, or moral corruption, that has any tendency to destroy the natural capacity, or even to diminish it, properly speaking. If sin were of such a nature as necessarily to have that tendency and effect; then it might be expected, that wicked men, in a future state, where they are given up entirely to the unrestrained exercise of their corruptions and lusts, and sin is in all respects brought to its greatest perfection in them, would have the capacity of their souls greatly diminished. This we have no reason to suppose; but rather, on the contrary, that their capacities are greatly enlarged, and that their actual knowledge is vastly increased; and that even with respect to the Divine Being, and the things of religion, and the great concerns of the immortal souls of men, the eyes of wicked men are opened, when they go into another world.

The greatness of the abilities of devils may be argued, from the representation in Eph. vi. 12. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers," &c. The same may also be argued from what the Scripture says of Satan's subtilty. Gen. iii. 1. 2 Cor. xi. 3. Acts, xiii. 10. And as the devil has a faculty of understanding of large capacity, so he is capable of a great speculative knowledge of the things of God, and the invisible and eternal world, as well as other things; and must needs actually have a great understanding of these things; as these have always been chiefly in his view; and as his circumstances, from his first existence, have been such as have tended chiefly to engage him to attend to these things. Before his fall, he was one of those angels who continually beheld the face of the

Father in heaven: and sin has no tendency to destroy the memory, and therefore has no tendency to blot out of it any speculative knowledge that was formerly there.

As the devil's subtilty shews his great capacity; so the way in which his subtilty is exercised and manifested—which is principally in his artful management with respect to things of religion, his exceeding subtil representations, insinuations, reasonings, and temptations, concerning these things—demonstrates his great actual understanding of them; as, in order to be a very artful disputant in any science, though it be only to confound and deceive such as are conversant in it, a person had need to have a great and extensive acquaintance with the things which pertain to that science.

Thus the devil has undoubtedly a great degree of speculative knowledge in divinity; having been, as it were, educated in the best divinity school in the universe, viz. the heaven of heavens. He must needs have such an extensive and accurate knowledge concerning the nature and attributes of God, as we, worms of the dust, in our present state, are not capable of. And he must have a far more extensive knowledge of the works of God, as of the work of creation in particular; for he was a spectator of the creation of this visible world; he was one of those morning-stars (Job xxxviii. 4—7.) “who sang together, and of those sons of God, that shouted for joy, when God laid the foundations of the earth, and laid the measures thereof, and stretched the line upon it” And so he must have a very great knowledge of God's works of providence. He has been a spectator of the series of these works from the beginning; he has seen how God has governed the world in all ages; and he has seen the whole train of God's wonderful successive dispensation of providence towards his church, from generation to generation. And he has not been an indifferent spectator; but the great opposition between God and him, in the whole course of those dispensations, has necessarily engaged his attention in the strictest observation of them. He must have a great degree of knowledge concerning Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men, and the nature and method of the work of Redemption, and the wonderful wisdom of God in this contrivance. It is that work of God wherein, above all others, God has acted in opposition to him, and in which he has chiefly set himself in opposition to God. It is with relation to this affair, that the mighty warfare has been maintained, which has been carried on between Michael and his angels, and the devil and his angels, through all ages

from the beginning of the world, and especially since Christ appeared. The devil has had enough to engage his attention to the steps of divine wisdom in this work; for it is to that wisdom he has opposed his subtilty; and he has seen and found, to his great disappointment and unspeakable torment, how divine wisdom, as exercised in that work, has baffled and confounded his devices. He has a great knowledge of the things of another world; for the things of that world are in his immediate view. He has a great knowledge of heaven; for he has been an inhabitant of that world of glory: and he has a great knowledge of hell, and the nature of its misery; for he is the first inhabitant of hell; and above all the other inhabitants, has experience of its torment, and has felt them constantly, for more than fifty-seven hundred years. He must have a great knowledge of the holy Scriptures; for it is evident he is not hindered from knowing what is written there, by the use he made of the words of Scripture in his temptation of our Saviour. And if he can know, he has much opportunity to know, and must needs have a disposition to know, with the greatest exactness; that he may, to greater effect, pervert and wrest the Scripture, and prevent such an effect of the word of God on the hearts of men, as shall tend to overthrow his kingdom. He must have a great knowledge of the nature of mankind, their capacity, their dispositions, and the corruptions of their hearts; for he has had long and great observation and experience. The heart of man is what he had chiefly to do with, in his subtil devices, mighty efforts, restless and indefatigable operations and exertions of himself, from the beginning of the world. And it is evident that he has a great speculative knowledge of the nature of experimental religion, by his being able to imitate it so artfully, and in such a manner as to transform himself into an angel of light.

Therefore it is manifest, from my text and doctrine, that no degree of speculative knowledge of religion is any certain sign of true piety. Whatever clear notions a man may have of the attributes of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, the nature of the two covenants, the economy of the persons of the Trinity, and the part which each person has in the affair of man's redemption; if he can discourse never so excellently of the offices of Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and the admirable methods of divine wisdom, and the harmony of the various attributes of God in that way; if he can talk never so clearly and exactly of the method of the justification of a sinner, and of the nature of conversion, and the operations of

the Spirit of God, in applying the redemption of Christ; giving good distinctions, happily solving difficulties, and answering objections, in a manner tending greatly to enlighten the ignorant, to the edification of the church of God, and the conviction of gainsayers, and the great increase of light in the world: If he has more knowledge of this sort than hundreds of true saints of an ordinary education, and most divines; yet all is no certain evidence of any degree of saving grace in the heart.

It is true, the Scripture often speaks of knowledge of divine things, as what is peculiar to true saints; as in John xvii. 3. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Matt. xi. 27. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Psal. ix. 10. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." Philip. iii. 8. "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." But then, we must understand it of a different *kind* of knowledge from that speculative understanding which the devil has to so great a degree. It will also be allowed, that the spiritual saving knowledge of God and divine things, greatly promotes speculative knowledge, as it engages the mind in its search into things of this kind, and much assists to a distinct understanding of them; so that, other things being equal, they who have spiritual knowledge, are much more likely than others to have a good doctrinal acquaintance with things of religion; but yet such acquaintance may be no distinguishing characteristic of true saints.

III It may also be inferred from what has been observed, that for persons merely to yield a *speculative assent* to the doctrines of religion as true, is no certain evidence of a state of grace. My text tells us, that the devils believe; and as they believe that there is one God, so they believe the truth of the doctrines of religion in general. The devil is orthodox in his faith; he believes the true scheme of doctrine; he is no Deist, Socinian, Arian, Pelagian, or Antinomian; the articles of his faith are all sound, and in them he is thoroughly established.

Therefore, for a person to believe the doctrines of Christianity merely from the force of arguments, as discerned only by speculation, is no evidence of grace.

It is probably a very rare thing for unregenerate men to have a strong persuasion of the truth of the doctrines of religion, especially such of them as are very mysterious, and much above the comprehension of reason. Yet if he be very confident of the truth of Christianity and its doctrines, and is able to argue most strongly for the proof of them, in this he goes nothing beyond the devil; who doubtless has a great knowledge of the rational arguments by which the truth of the Christian religion and its several principles are evinced.

And therefore when the Scripture speaks of *believing that Jesus is the Son of God*, as a sure evidence of grace, as in 1 John v. 1. and other places, it must be understood, not of a mere speculative assent, but of *another kind and manner of believing*, which is called the faith of God's elect. Titus i. 1. There is a *spiritual conviction* of the truth, which is a believing with the whole heart, peculiar to true saints; of which I shall speak more particularly.

IV. It may be inferred from the doctrine which has been insisted on, that it is no certain sign of persons being savingly converted, that they have been subjects of very great *distress and terrors* of mind, through apprehensions of God's wrath, and fears of damnation.

That the devils are the subjects of great terrors, through apprehensions of God's wrath, and fears of its future effects, is implied in my text; which speaks not only of their believing, but *trembling*. It must be no small degree of terror which should make those principalities and powers, those mighty, proud and sturdy beings, to tremble.

There are many terrors that some persons who are concerned for their salvation, are the subjects of, which are not from any proper awakenings of conscience, or apprehensions of truth, but from melancholy or frightful impressions on their imagination; or some groundless apprehensions, and the delusions and false suggestions of Satan. But if they have had never so great and long-continued terrors from real awakenings, and convictions of truth, and views of things as they are, this is no more than what is in the devils, and will be in all wicked men in another world. However stupid and senseless most ungodly men are now, all will be effectually awakened at last. There will be no such thing as slumbering in hell. There are many that cannot be awakened by the most solemn warnings and awful threatenings of the word of God—the most alarming discourses from the pulpit, and the most awakening and awful

providences—but all will be thoroughly awakened by the sound of the last trumpet, and the appearance of Christ to judgment. All sorts will then be filled with most amazing terrors, from apprehensions of truth, and seeing things as they are; when “the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, (such as were the most lofty and stout-hearted, most ready to treat the things of religion with contempt), shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Rev. vi. 15—17.—Therefore if persons have been first awakened, and afterwards have had comfort and joy, it is no certain sign that their comforts are of the right kind, because they were preceded by very great terrors.

V. It may be further inferred from the doctrine, That *no work of the law* on men’s hearts, in conviction of guilt, and just desert of punishment, is a sure argument that a person has been savingly converted.

Not only are no awakenings and terrors any certain evidence of this, but no mere legal work whatsoever, though carried to the utmost extent. Nothing wherein there is no grace or spiritual light, but only the mere conviction of natural conscience, and those acts and operations of the mind which are the result of this—and so are, as it were, merely forced by the clear light of conscience, without the concurrence of the heart and inclination with that light—is any certain sign of the saving grace of God, or that a person was ever savingly converted.

The evidence of this, from my text and doctrine, is demonstrative; because the devils are the subjects of these things; and all wicked men that shall finally perish, will be the subjects of the same. Natural conscience is not extinguished in the damned in hell; but, on the contrary, remains there in its greatest strength, and is brought to its most perfect exercise; most fully to do its proper office as God’s vicegerent in the soul, to condemn those rebels against the King of Heaven and earth, and manifest God’s just wrath and vengeance, and by that means to torment them, and be as a never-dying worm within them. Wretched men find means in this world to blind the eyes and stop the mouth of this vicegerent of a sin-revenging God; but they shall not be able to do it always. In

another world, the eyes and mouth of conscience will be fully opened. God will hereafter make wicked men to see and know these things from which now they industriously hide their eyes, Isa. xxvi. 10, 11. "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: But they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people, yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them." We have this expression often annexed to God's threatenings of wrath to his enemies; "And they shall know that I am the Lord." This shall be accomplished by their woeful experience, and clear light in their consciences, whereby they shall be made to know, whether they will or not, how great and terrible, holy and righteous a God Jehovah is, whose authority they have despised: and they shall know that he is righteous and holy in their destruction. This all the ungodly will be convinced of at the day of judgment, by the bringing to light of all their wickedness of heart and practice; and setting all their sins, with all their aggravations in order, not only in the view of others, even of the whole world, but in the view of their own consciences. This is threatened, Psalm l. 21. "These things thou hast done, and I kept silence: Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." Compare this with the four first verses of the psalm.—The design of the day of judgment is not to find out what is just, as it is with human judgments; but it is to *manifest* what is just; to make known God's justice in the judgment which he will execute, to men's own consciences, and to the world. And therefore that day is called "the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 5. Now sinners often cavil against the justice of God's dispensations, and particularly the punishment which he threatens for their sins; excusing themselves, and condemning him: But when God comes to manifest their wickedness in the light of that day, and to call them to an account, they will be speechless; Matth. xxii. 11, 12. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." When the King of heaven and earth comes to judgment, their consciences will be so perfectly enlightened and convinced by the All-searching Light they shall then stand in, that their mouths

will be effectually stopped, as to all excuses for themselves, all pleading of their own righteousness to excuse or justify them, and all objections against the justice of their Judge, that their conscience will condemn them only, and not God.

Therefore it follows from the doctrine, That it can be no certain sign of grace, that persons have had great convictions of sin. Suppose they have had their sins of life, with their aggravations, remarkably set before ^athem, so as greatly to affect and terrify them ; and withal, have had a great sight of the wickedness of their hearts, the greatness of the sin of unbelief, and of the unexcuseableness and heinousness of their most secret spiritual iniquities. Perhaps they have been convinced of the utter insufficiency of their own righteousness, and they despair of being recommended to God by it ; have been convinced that they are wholly without excuse before God, and deserve damnation ; and that God would be just in executing the threatened punishment upon them, though it be so dreadful. All these things will be in the ungodly at the day of judgment, when they shall stand with devils, at the left hand, and shall be doomed as accursed to everlasting fire with them.

Indeed there will be no submission in them. Their conscience will be convinced that God is just in their condemnation ; but yet their wills will not be bowed to God's justice. There will be no acquiescence of mind in that divine attribute ; no yielding of the soul to God's sovereignty, but the highest degree of enmity and opposition. A true submission of the heart and will to the justice and sovereignty of God, is therefore allowed to be something peculiar to true converts, being something which the devils and damned souls are and ever will be far from ; and to which a mere work of the law, and convictions of conscience, however great and clear, will never bring men.

When sinners are the subjects of great convictions of conscience, and a remarkable work of the law, it is only transacting the business of the day of judgment in the conscience before-hand. God sits enthroned in the conscience, as at the last day he will sit enthroned in the clouds of heaven ; the sinner is arraigned as it were at God's bar ; and God appears in his awful greatness, as a just and holy, sin-hating, and sin-revenging God, as he will then. The sinner's iniquities are brought to light ; his sins set in order before him ; the hidden things of darkness, and the counsels of the heart are made

manifest, as it will be then. Many witnesses do as it were rise up against the sinner under convictions of conscience, as they will against the wicked at the day of judgment; and the books are opened particularly the book of God's strict and holy law is opened in the conscience, and its rules applied for the condemnation of the sinner; which is the book that will be opened at the day of judgment; as the grand rule to all such wicked men as have lived under it. And the sentence of the law is pronounced against the sinner, and the justice of the sentence made manifest, as it will be at day of judgment. The conviction of a sinner at the day of judgment will be a work of the law, as well as the conviction of conscience in this world: and the work of the law (if the work be merely legal) is never carried further in the consciences of sinners now than it will be at that day, when its work will be perfect in thoroughly stopping the sinner's mouth; Rom. iii. 19. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Every mouth shall be stopped by the law, either now or hereafter; and all the world shall become sensibly guilty before God, guilty of death, deserving of damnation.—And therefore, if sinners have been the subjects of a great work of the law, and have thus become guilty, and their mouths have been stopped; it is no certain sign that ever they have been converted.

Indeed the want of a thorough sense of guilt, and desert of punishment, and conviction of the justice of God, in threatening damnation, is a sign that a person never was converted, and truly brought, with the whole soul, to embrace Christ as a Saviour from this punishment: For it is easily demonstrable, that there is no such thing as entirely and cordially accepting an offer of a Saviour from a punishment which we think we do not deserve. But having such a conviction is no certain sign that persons have true faith, or have ever truly received Christ as their Saviour. And if persons have great comfort, joy, and confidence suddenly let into their minds, after great convictions, it is no infallible evidence that their comforts are built on a good foundation.

It is manifest, therefore, that too much stress has been laid by many persons on a great work of the law preceding their comforts; who seem not only to have looked on such a work of the law as necessary to precede faith, but also to have esteemed it as the chief evidence of the truth and genu-

iness of succeeding faith and comforts. By this means it is to be feared very many have been deceived, and established in a false hope. And what is to be seen in the event of things, in multitudes of instances, confirms this. It may be safely allowed that it is not so usual for great convictions of conscience to prove abortive, and fail of a good issue, as for lesser convictions; and that more generally when the Spirit of God proceeds so far with sinners, in the work of the law, as to give them a great sight of their hearts, and of the heinousness of their spiritual iniquities; and to convince them that they are without excuse;—and that all their righteousness can do nothing to merit God's favours; but they lie justly exposed to God's eternal vengeance without mercy—a work of saving conversion follows. But we can have no warrant to say, it is universally so, or to lay it down as an infallible rule that when convictions of conscience have gone thus far, saving faith and repentance will surely follow. If any should think they have ground for such a determination, because they cannot conceive what end God should have, in carrying a work of conviction to such a length, and so preparing the heart for faith, and after all, never giving saving faith to the soul; I desire it may be considered, where will be the end of our doubts and difficulties, if we think ourselves sufficient to determine so positively and particularly concerning God's ends and designs in what he does. It may be asked such an objector, what is God's end in giving a sinner any degree of the strivings of his Spirit, and conviction of conscience, when he afterwards suffers it to come to nothing?

If he may give some degree that may finally be in vain, who shall set the bounds, and say how great the degree shall be? Who can, on sure grounds, determine, that when a sinner has so much of that conviction which the devils and damned in hell have, true faith and eternal salvation will be the certain consequence? This we may certainly determine, that, if the Apostle's argument in the text be good, not any thing whatsoever that the devils have is certainly connected with such a consequence. Seeing sinners, while such, are capable of the most perfect convictions, and will have them at the day of judgment, and in hell; who shall say, that God never shall cause reprobates to anticipate the future judgment and damnation in that respect? And if he does so, who shall say to him, What dost thou? Or call him to account concerning his ends in so doing. Not but that many possible wise ends might be thought of, and

mentioned, if it were needful, or I had now room for it.— The Spirit of God is often quenched by the exercise of the wickedness of men's hearts, after he has gone far in a work of conviction, so that their convictions never have a good issue. And who can say that sinners, by the exercise of their opposition and enmity against God, which is not at all mortified by the greatest legal convictions, neither in the damned in hell nor sinners on earth, may not provoke God to take his Spirit from them, even after he has proceeded the greatest length in a work of conviction? Who can say, that God never is provoked to destroy some, after he has brought them, as it were, through the wilderness, even to the edge of the land of rest? As he slew some of the Israelites, even in the plains of Moab.

And let it be considered, where is our warrant in Scripture, to make use of any legal convictions, or any method or order of successive events in a work of the law, and consequent comforts, as a sure sign of regeneration. The Scripture is abundant, in expressly mentioning evidences of grace, and of a state of favour with God, as characteristics of true saints. But where do we ever find such things as these amongst those evidences? Or where do we find any other signs insisted on, besides grace itself, its nature, exercises, and fruits? These were the evidences that Job relied upon: These were the things that the Psalmist every where insists upon as evidences of his sincerity, and particularly in the 119th Psalm, from the beginning to the end: These were the signs that Hezekiah trusted to in his sickness.

These were the characteristics of those that are truly happy given by our Saviour in the beginning of his sermon on the Mount. These are the things that Christ mentions, as the true evidences of being his real disciples, in his last and dying discourse to his disciples, in the xivth, xvth, and xvith chapters of John, and in his intercessory prayer, chap. xvii. These are the things which the Apostle Paul often speaks of as evidences of his sincerity, and sure title to a crown of glory. And these are the things he often mentions to others, in his epistles, as the proper evidences of real Christianity, a justified state, and a title to glory. He insists on the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, as the proper evidences of being Christ's, and living in the Spirit: Gal. v. 22—25. It is that charity, or divine love, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy, &c. that he insists on, as the most

essential evidence of true godliness ; without which, all other things are nothing. Such are the signs which the Apostle James insists on, as the proper evidence of a truly wise and good man : James iii. 17. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." And such are the signs of true Christianity, which the Apostle John insists on throughout his epistles. And we never have any where in the Bible, from the beginning to the end of it, any other signs of godliness given, than such as these. If persons have such things as these apparently in them, it ought to be determined that they are truly converted, without its being first known what method the Spirit of God took to introduce these things into the soul, which oftentimes is altogether untraceable. All the works of God are in some respects unsearchable : but the Scripture often represents the works of the Spirit of God as peculiarly so ; Isa. xl. 13. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught him ?" Eccles. xi. 5. "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child : so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all." John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

VI. It follows from my text and doctrine, That it is no certain sign of grace, that persons have earnest desires and longings after salvation.

The devils, doubtless, long for deliverance from the misery they suffer, and from that greater misery which they expect. If they tremble through fear of it, they must, necessarily, earnestly desire to be delivered from it. Wicked men are, in Scripture, represented as longing for the privileges of the righteous, when the door is shut, and they are shut out from among them : They come to the door, and cry, Lord, Lord, open to us. Therefore, we are not to look on all desires that are very earnest and vehement, as certain evidences of a pious heart. There are earnest desires of a religious nature, which the saints have, that are the proper breathings of a new nature, and distinguishing qualities of true saints : but there are also longings, which unregenerate men may have, which are often mistaken for marks of godliness. They think they hunger and thirst after righteousness, and have earnest desires after God

and Christ, and long for heaven; when indeed, all is to be resolved into self-love; and so is a longing which arises from no higher principles than the earnest desires of devils.

VII. It may be inferred from what has been observed, That persons who have no grace may have a great apprehension of an external glory in things heavenly and divine, and of whatsoever is external pertaining to religion.

If persons have impressed strongly on their minds ideas obtained by the external senses, whether by the ear, as any kind of sound, pleasant music, or words spoken of excellent signification; words of Scripture, suitable to their case, or adapted to the subject of their meditations: Or ideas obtained by the eye, as of a visible beauty and glory, a shining light, golden streets, gates of precious stone, a most magnificent throne surrounded by angels and saints in shining ranks: or any thing external belonging to Jesus Christ, either in his humbled state, as hanging on the cross, with his crown of thorns, his wounds open, and blood trickling down; or in his glorified state, with awful majesty, or ravishing beauty and sweetness in his countenance; his face shining above the brightness of the sun, and the like: these things are no certain signs of grace.

Multitudes that are now in hell, will have ideas of the external glory that pertains to things heavenly, far beyond what ever any have in this world. They will see all that external glory and beauty, in which Christ will appear at the day of judgment, when the sun shall be turned into darkness before him; which, doubtless, will be ten thousand times greater than ever was impressed on the imagination of either saints or sinners in this present state, or ever was conceived by any mortal man.

VIII. It may be inferred from the doctrine, That persons who have no grace may have a very great and affecting sense of many divine things on their hearts.

The devil has not only great speculative knowledge, but he has a sense of many divine things, which deeply affects him, and is most strongly impressed on his heart. As,

1. The devils and damned souls have a great sense of the vast importance of the things of another world. They are in the invisible world, and they see and know how great

the things of that world are : Their experience teaches them in the most affecting manner. They have a great sense of the worth of salvation, and the worth of immortal souls, and the vast importance of those things that concern men's eternal welfare. The parable in the latter end of the 16th chapter of Luke teaches this, in representing the rich man in hell, as intreating that Lazarus might be sent to his five brothers, to testify unto them, lest they should come to that place of torment. They who endure the torments of hell have doubtless a most lively and affecting sense of the vastness of an endless eternity, and of the comparative momentariness of this life, and the vanity of the concerns and enjoyments of time.—They are convinced effectually, that all the things of this world, even those that appear greatest and most important to the inhabitants of the earth, are despicable trifles, in comparison of the things of the eternal world. They have a great sense of the preciousness of time, and of the means of grace, and the inestimable value of the privileges which they enjoy which live under the gospel. They are fully sensible of the folly of those that go on in sin ; neglect their opportunities ; make light of the counsels and warnings of God ; and bitterly lament their exceeding folly in their own sins, by which they have brought on themselves so great and remediless misery. When sinners, by woeful experience, know the dreadful issue of their evil way, they will mourn at the last, saying, how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me ! Prov. iv. 11, 12, 13.

Therefore, however true godliness is now attended with a great sense of the importance of divine things—and it is rare that men who have no grace maintain such a sense in any steady and persevering manner—yet it is manifest those things are no certain evidences of grace. Unregenerate men may have a sense of the importance of eternity, and the vanity of time ; the worth of immortal souls ; the preciousness of time and means of grace, and the folly of the way of allowed sin. They may have such a sense of those things, as may deeply affect them, and cause them to mourn for their own sins, and be much concerned for others ; though it be true, they have not these things in the same manner, and in all respects from the same principles and views as godly men have them.

2. Devils and damned men have a strong and most affecting sense of the awful greatness and majesty of God. This is greatly made manifest in the execution of divine vengeance

on his enemies. Rom. ix. 22. "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" The devils tremble before this great and terrible God, and under a strong sense of his awful majesty. It is greatly manifested to them and damned souls now; but shall be manifested in a further degree, in that day when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance upon them; and when they shall earnestly desire to fly, and be hid from the face of him that sits on the throne, (which shall be, "because of the glory of his majesty," Isa. ii. 10.) and when they shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. When Christ comes at the last day, in the glory of his Father, every eye shall see him in that glory, (in this respect, that they shall see his terrible majesty), and they also that pierced him, Rev. i. 7. Both those devils, and wicked men, which tormented and insulted him when he appeared in meanness and ignominy, shall then see him in the glory of his Father.

It is evident, therefore, that a sense of God's terrible majesty is no certain evidence of saving grace: for we see that wicked men and devils are capable of it; yea, many wicked men in this world have actually had it. This is a manifestation which God made of himself in the sight of that wicked congregation at Mount Sinai, which they saw, and with which they were deeply affected, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

3. Devils and damned men have some kind of conviction and sense of all attributes of God, both natural and moral, that is strong and very affecting.

The devils know God's almighty *power*: they saw a great manifestation of it, when they saw God lay the foundation of the earth, &c. and were much affected with it. They have seen innumerable other great demonstrations of his power; as in the universal deluge, the destruction of Sodom, the wonders in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness; causing the sun to stand still in Joshua's time, and many others.—And they had a very affecting manifestation of God's mighty power on themselves, in casting all their hosts down from heaven into hell; and have continual affecting experience of it, in God's reserving them in strong chains of darkness, and in the strong pains they feel. They will hereafter have far more affecting experience of it, when they shall be punished from

the glory of God's power, with that mighty destruction in expectation of which they now tremble. So the devils have a great knowledge of the *wisdom* of God: they have had unspeakably more opportunity and occasion to observe it in the work of creation, and also in the works of providence, than any mortal man has ever had; and have been themselves the subjects of innumerable affecting manifestations of it, in God's disappointing and confounding them in their most subtle devices, in so wonderful and amazing a manner. So they see and find the infinite purity and *holiness* of the divine nature, in the most affecting manner, as this appears in his infinite hatred of sin, in what they feel of the dreadful effects of that hatred. They know already by what they suffer, and will know hereafter to a greater degree, and far more affecting manner, that such is the opposition of God's nature to sin, that it is like a consuming fire, which burns with infinite vehemence against it. They also will see the holiness of God, as exercised in his love to righteousness and holiness, in the glory of Christ and his church; which also will be very affecting to devils and wicked men. And the exact *justice* of God will be manifested to them in the clearest and strongest, most convincing and most affecting light, at the day of judgment; when they will also see great and affecting demonstrations of the riches of his *grace*, in the marvellous fruits of his love to the vessels of *mercy*; when they shall see them at the right hand of Christ, shining as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and shall hear the blessed sentence pronounced upon them; and will be deeply affected with it, as seems naturally implied in Luke xiii. 28, 29. The devils know God's *truth*, and therefore they believe his threatenings, and tremble in expectation of their accomplishment. And wicked men that now doubt his truth, and dare not trust his word, will hereafter, in the most convincing affecting manner, find his word to be true in all that he has threatened, and will see that he is faithful to his promises in the rewards of his saints. Devils and damned men know that God is eternal and unchangeable; and therefore they despair of there ever being an end to their misery. Therefore it is manifest, that merely persons having an affecting sense of some, or even of all God's attributes, is no certain sign that they have the true grace of God in their hearts.

Object. Here possibly some may object against the force of the foregoing reasoning, That ungodly men in this world are in exceeding different circumstances from those in which the devils are, and from those which wicked men will be in at

the day of judgment. Those things which are visible and present to these, are now future and invisible to the other; and wicked men in this world are in the body, that clogs and hinders the soul, and are encompassed with objects that blind and stupify them. Therefore it does not follow, that because the wicked in another world have a great apprehension and lively sense of such things without grace, ungodly men in their present state may have the same.

Ans. To this I answer: It is not supposed that ever men in this life have all those things which have been mentioned, to the same *degree* that the devils and damned have them.—None supposes that ever any in this life have terrors of conscience to an equal degree with them. It is not to be supposed that any mortal man, whether godly or ungodly, has an equal degree of speculative knowledge with the devil. And, as was just now observed, the wicked at the day of judgment, will have a vastly greater idea of the external glory of Christ than ever any have in the present state. So, doubtless, they will have a far greater sense of God's awful greatness and terrible majesty, than any could subsist under in this frail state. So we may well conclude, that the devils and wicked men in hell have a greater and more affecting sense of the vastness of eternity, and (in some respects) a greater sense of the importance of the things of another world, than any here have; and they have also longings after salvation to an higher degree than any wicked men in this world.

But yet it is evident that men in this world may have things of the same *kind* with devils and damned men; the same sort of light in the understanding; the same views and affections, the same sense of things, the same kind of impressions on the mind and on the heart. The objection is against the conclusiveness of that reasoning which is the Apostle's, more properly than mine. The Apostle judged it a conclusive argument against such as thought their believing there was one God an evidence of their being gracious, that the devils believed the same. So the argument is exactly the same against such as think they have grace, because they believe God is a holy God, or because they have a sense of the awful majesty of God. The same may be observed of other things that have been mentioned. My text has reference, not only to the act of the understandings of devils in believing, but to that affection of their hearts which accompanies the views they have; as trembling is an effect of the affection of the heart. Which

shews, that if men have both the same views of understanding, and also the same affections of heart that the devils have, it is no sign of grace.

And as to the particular degree to which these things may be carried in men in this world without grace, it appears not safe to make use of it as an infallible rule to determine men's state. I know not where we have any rule to go by, to fix the precise degree in which God by his providence, or his common influences on the mind, will excite in wicked men in this world, the same views and affections which the wicked have in another world; which, it is manifest, the former are capable of as well as the latter, having the same faculties and principles of soul; and which views and affections, it is evident, they often are actually the subjects of in some degree, some in a greater, and some in a less degree. The infallible evidences of grace which are laid down in Scripture are of another kind: they are all of a holy and spiritual nature; and therefore things of that kind which a heart that is wholly carnal and corrupt cannot receive or experience, 1 Cor. ii. 14. I might also here add, that observation and experience, in very many instances, seem to confirm what Scripture and reason teaches in these things.

The *second* use may be of *self-examination*.

Let the things which have been observed put all on examining themselves, and enquiring, whether they have any better evidences of saving grace, than such as have been mentioned.

We see how the infallible Spirit of God, in the text, plainly represents the things of which the devils are the subjects, as no sure sign of grace. And we have now, in some instances, observed how far the devils and damned men go, and will go in their experience, their knowledge of divine things, their belief of truth, their awakenings and terrors of conscience, their conviction of guilt, and of the justice of God in their eternal dreadful damnation, their longings after salvation, their sight of the external glory of Christ and heavenly things, their sense of the vast importance of the things of religion, and another world; their sense of the awful greatness and terrible majesty of God, yea, of all God's attributes. These things may well put us on serious self-examination, whether we have any thing to evidence our good estate, beyond what the devils have. Christ said to his disciples; "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes

and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven:" so the Spirit of Christ, in his Apostle James, does in effect say, in my text, except what you experience in your souls go beyond the experiences of devils, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God.

Here, it may be, some will be ready to say, I have something besides all these things; what the devils have not, even love and joy.

I answer, You may have something besides the experiences of devils, and yet nothing beyond them. Though the experience be different, yet it may not be owing to any different principle, but only the different circumstances under which these principles are exercised. The principles from whence the fore-mentioned things in devils and damned men arise, are these two, natural understanding and self-love. It is from these principles of natural understanding and self-love, as exercised about their own dispositions and actions, and God as their judge, that they have natural conscience, and have such convictions of conscience as have been spoken of. It is from these principles that they have such a sense of the importance of the things of religion, and the eternal world, and such longings after salvation. It is from the joint exercise of these two principles that they are so sensible of the awful majesty of God, and of all the attributes of the divine nature, and so greatly affected with them. And it is from these principles, joined with external sense, the wicked, at the day of judgment, will have so great an apprehension of, and will be so greatly affected by the external glory of Christ and his saints. And that you have a kind of love, or gratitude and joy, which devils and damned men have not, may possibly not arise from any other principles in your heart different from these two, but only from these principles as exercised in different circumstances. As for instance, your being a subject of the restraining grace of God, and under circumstances of hope. The natural understanding and self-love of devils possibly might affect them in the same manner if they were in the same circumstances. If your love to God has its first source from nothing else than a supposed immediate divine witness, or any other supposed evidence, that Christ died for you in particular, and that God loves you; it springs from no higher principles than self-love; which is a principle that reigns in the hearts of devils. Self-love is sufficient, without grace, to cause men to love those that love them, or that they imagine love them, and make much of them; Luke vi. 32. "For if ye love them

which love you, what thank have you? For sinners also love those that love them." And would not the hearts of devils be filled with great joy, if they, by any means, should take up a confident persuasion that God had pardoned them, and was become their friend, and that they should be delivered from that wrath of which they now are in trembling expectation. If the devils go so far as you have heard, even in their circumstances, being totally cast off, and given up to unrestrained wickedness, being without hope, knowing that God is, and ever will be their enemy, they suffering his wrath without mercy: How far may we reasonably suppose they might go, in imitation of grace and pious experience, if they had the same degree of knowledge, as clear views, and as strong conviction, under circumstances of hope, and offers of mercy; and being the subjects of common grace, restraining their corruptions, and assisting and exciting the natural principles of reason, conscience, &c.? Such things, or any thing like them, in the heart of a sinner in this world; at the same time that he, from some strong impression on his imagination, has suddenly, after great terrors, imbibed a confidence, that now this great God is his Friend and Father, has released him from all the misery he feared, and has promised him eternal happiness: I say, such things would, doubtless, vastly heighten his ecstasy of joy, and raise the exercise of natural gratitude, (that principle from whence sinners love those that love them), and would occasion a great imitation of many graces in strong exercises. Is it any wonder then that multitudes under such a sort of affection are deceived? Especially when they have devils to help forward the delusion, whose great subtilty has chiefly been exercised in deceiving mankind through all past generations.

INQ. Here possibly some may be ready to inquire, If there be so many things which men may experience from no higher principles than are in the minds and hearts of devils; what are those exercises and affections that are of a higher nature, which I must find in my heart, and which I may justly look upon as sure signs of the saving grace of God's Spirit?

Ans. I answer, those exercises and affections which are good evidences of grace, differ from all that the devils have, and all that can arise from such principles as are in their hearts, in two things, viz. their *foundation* and their *tendency*.

1. They differ in their *foundation*, or in that belonging to them which is the foundation of all the rest that pertains to them, viz. An apprehension or sense of the *supreme holy beauty* and comeliness of divine things, as they are in themselves, or in their own nature.

Of this the devils and damned in hell are, and forever will be, entirely destitute. This the devils once had, while they stood in their integrity; but they wholly lost it when they fell. And this is the *only* thing that can be mentioned pertaining to the devil's apprehension and sense of the divine Being, that he did lose. Nothing else belonging to the knowledge of God, can be devised, of which he is destitute. It has been observed, that there is no one *attribute* of the divine nature, but what he knows, with a strong and very affecting conviction. This I think is evident and undeniable. But to the supreme beauty of the divine *nature* he is altogether blind. He sees no more of it, than a man born perfectly blind does of colours. The great sight he has of the attributes of God gives him an idea and strong sense of his awful majesty, but no idea of his beauty and comeliness. Though he has seen so much of God's wonderful works of power, wisdom, holiness, justice and truth, and his wonderful works of grace to mankind, for so many thousand years, and has had occasion to observe them with the strongest attention; yet all serves not to give him the least sense of his divine beauty. And though the devils should continue to exercise their mighty powers of mind with the strongest intention; and should take things in all possible views, in every order and arrangement; yet they never will see this. So little akin is the knowledge they have to this, that the great degrees of that knowledge, bring them no nearer to it. Yet the more knowledge they have of God of that kind, the more do they hate God. That wherein the beauty of the divine nature does most essentially consist, viz. his holiness, or moral excellency, appears in their eyes furthest from beauty. It is on that very account chiefly that he appears hateful to them. The more holiness they see in him, the more hateful he appears: The greater their sight is of his holiness, the higher is their hatred of him raised. And because of their hatred of his holiness, they hate him the more, the more they see of his other attributes. They would hate a holy Being, whatever his other attributes were; but they hate such a holy Being the worse, for his being infinitely wise, and infinitely powerful, &c. more than they would do, if they saw in him less power and less wisdom.

The wicked, at the day of judgment, will see every thing else in Christ, but his beauty and amiableness. There is no one quality or property of his person, that can be thought of but what will be set before them in the strongest light at that day, but only such as consist in this. They will see him coming in the clouds of heaven, "in power, and great glory, in the glory of his Father." They will have that view of his external glory, which is vastly beyond what we can imagine; and they will have the strongest and most convincing demonstrations of all his attributes and perfections. They will have a sense of his great majesty, that will be, as it were, infinitely affecting to them. They shall be made to know effectually, "That he is the Lord." They shall see what he is, and what he does; his nature and works shall appear in the strongest view: But his infinite beauty and amiableness, which is all in all, and without which every other property is nothing, and worse than nothing, they will not see.

Therefore in a sight or sense of this fundamentally consists the difference between the saving grace of God's Spirit, and the experiences of devils and damned souls. This is the foundation of every thing else that is distinguishing in true Christian experience. This is the foundation of the faith of God's elect. This gives the mind a saving belief of the truth of divine things. It is a view of the excellency of the gospel, or sense of the divine beauty and amiableness of the scheme of doctrine there exhibited, that savingly convinces the mind that it is indeed divine or of God. This account of the matter is plainly implied; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." And, verse 6. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is very evident that a saving belief of the gospel, is here spoken of by the Apostle as arising from a view of the divine glory or beauty of the things it exhibits. It is by this view that the soul of a true convert is enabled savingly to see the sufficiency of Christ for his salvation. He that has his eyes opened to behold the divine superlative beauty and loveliness of Jesus Christ, is convinced of his sufficiency to stand as a Mediator between him, a guilty hell deserving wretch, and an infinitely holy God, in an ex-

ceeding different manner than ever he can be convinced by the arguments of authors or preachers, however excellent.

When he once comes to see Christ's divine loveliness, he wonders no more that he is thought worthy by God the Father to be accepted for the vilest sinner. Now it is not difficult for him to conceive how the blood of Christ should be esteemed by God so precious as to be worthy to be accepted as a compensation for the greatest sins. The soul now properly sees the preciousness of Christ, and so does properly see and understand the very ground and reason of his acceptableness to God, and the value God sets on his blood, obedience, and intercession. This satisfies the poor guilty soul, and gives it rest, when the finest and most elaborate discourses about the sufficiency of Christ, and suitableness of the way of salvation, would not do it. When a man comes to see the proper foundation of faith and affiance with his own eyes, then he believes savingly. "He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life;" John vi. 40. When Christ thus manifests God's name to men, then they believe that all things whatsoever God has given to Christ are of him, and believes that Christ was sent of God:" John xvii. 6, 7, 8. And "they that thus know Christ's name will trust in him;" Psalm ix. 10. In order to true faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God is revealed in men. Gal. i. 15, 16. And it is this sight of the divine beauty of Christ, that bows the wills, and draws the hearts of men. A sight of the greatness of God in his attributes, may overwhelm men, and be more than they can endure; but the enmity and opposition of the heart may remain in its full strength, and the will remain inflexible. Whereas one glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God, and the supreme amiableness of Jesus Christ shining into the heart, overcomes and abolishes this opposition, and inclines the soul to Christ, as it were, by an omnipotent power. So that now, not only the understanding, but the will and the whole soul receives and embraces the Saviour. This is most certainly the discovery, which is the first internal foundation of a saving faith in Christ in the soul of the true convert, and not any immediate outward or inward witness, that Christ loves him, or that he died for him in particular, and is his Saviour; so begetting confidence and joy, and a seeming love to Christ, because he loves him. By such faith and conversion, (demonstrably vain and counterfeit) multitudes have been deluded. The sight of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, works true supreme love to God. This is a sight of the proper

foundation of supreme love to God, viz. *the supreme loveliness of his nature*; and a love to him on this ground is truly above any thing that can come from a mere principle of self-love, which is in the hearts of devils as well as men. And this begets true spiritual and holy joy in the soul, which is indeed joy in God, and glorying in him, and not rejoicing in ourselves.

This sight of the beauty of divine things will excite true desires and longings of soul after those things; not like the longings of devils, but natural free desires; the desires of appetite, the thirstings of a new nature, as a new-born babe desires the mother's breast; and as a hungry man longs for some pleasant food he thinks of; or as the thirsty hart pants after the cool and clear stream.

This *sense of divine beauty* is the first thing in the actual change made in the soul in true conversion, and is the foundation of every thing else belonging to that change; as is evident by those words of the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "But we all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

2. Truly gracious affections and exercises of mind differ from such as are counterfeit, which arise from no higher principles than are in the hearts of devils, in their *tendency*; and that in these two respects.

(1.) They are of a tendency and influence very contrary to that which was especially the devil's sin, even pride. That pride was in a peculiar manner the devil's sin, is manifest from 1 Tim. iii. 6. "Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." False and delusive experiences evermore tend to this; though often times under the disguise of great and extraordinary humility. Spiritual pride is the prevailing temper and general character of hypocrites, deluded with false discoveries and affections.—They are in general of a disposition directly contrary to those two things belonging to the Christian temper, directed to by the Apostle; the one in Rom. xii. 16. "Be not wise in your own conceit;" and the other in Phil. ii. 3. "Let each esteem others better than themselves." False experience is conceited of itself, and affected with itself. Thus he that has false humility is much affected to think how he is abased before God. He that has false love is affected, when he thinks of the greatness of his love. The very food and nourishment of false experience is to view itself, and take much notice of itself;

and its very breath and life is to be some way shewing itself.—Whereas truly gracious views and affections are of a quite contrary tendency. They nourish no self-conceit; no exalting notion of the man's own righteousness, experience, or privileges; no high conceit of his humiliations. They incline to no ostentation, nor self-exaltation, under any disguise whatsoever. But that sense of the supreme, holy beauty and glory of God and Christ, which is the foundation of them, mortifies pride, and truly humbles the soul. It not only cuts off some of the outermost branches, but it strikes at the very root of pride; it alters the very nature and disposition of the heart. The light of God's beauty, and that alone, truly shews the soul its own deformity, and effectually inclines it to exalt God and abase itself.

(2.) These gracious exercises and affections differ from the other in their tendency to destroy Satan's interest; and that in two respects:

First, in the person himself. They cause the soul to hate every evil and false way, and to produce universal holiness of heart and life, disposing him to make the service of God, the promotion of his glory and the good of mankind, the very business of his life: whereas those false discoveries and affections have not this effect. There may indeed be great zeal, and a great deal of what is called Religion; but it is not a truly Christian zeal; it is not being zealous of good works. Their religion is not the service of God; it is not seeking and serving God; but indeed seeking and serving themselves.—Though there may be a change of life, it is not a change from every wicked way to a uniform Christian life and practice, but only turning the stream of corruption from one channel to another. Thus the Apostle James distinguishes, in our context, a true faith from the faith of devils; James ii. 19, 20 “Thou believest that there is one God. The devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” And thus the Apostle John distinguishes true communion with God; 1 John i. 6, 7. “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” By this he distinguishes true spiritual knowledge, ch. ii. 3, 4. “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his command-

ments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." And hereby the same Apostle distinguishes true love, ch. iii. 18, 19. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed (in *work*, as the word signifies) and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

2. Truly gracious experiences have a tendency to destroy Satan's interest in *the world*.

When false religion, consisting in the counterfeits of the operations of the Spirit of God, and in high pretences and great appearances of inward experimental religion, prevails among a people—though for the present it may surprise many, and may be the occasion of alarming and awakening some sinners—tends greatly to wound and weaken the cause of vital religion, and to strengthen the interest of Satan, desperately to harden the hearts of sinners, exceedingly to fill the world with prejudice against the power of godliness, to promote infidelity and licentious principles and practices; to build up and make strong the devil's kingdom in the world, more than open vice and profaneness, or professed Atheism, or public persecution, and perhaps more than any thing else whatsoever.

But it is not so with true religion in its genuine beauty.—That, if it prevails in great power, will doubtless excite the rage of the devil, and many other enemies of religion. However, it gives great advantage to its friends, and exceedingly strengthens their cause, and tends to convince or confound enemies. True religion is a divine light in the souls of the saints; and as it shines out in the conversation before men, it tends to induce others to glorify God. There is nothing like it (as to means) to awaken the consciences of men, to convince infidels, and to stop the mouths of gainsayers.—Though men naturally hate the power of godliness, yet when they see the fruits of it, there is a witness in their consciences in its favour. "He that serveth Christ in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, is acceptable to God, and approved of men," Rom. xiv. 17, 18. The prevailing of true religion ever tends to its honour in the world, though it commonly is the occasion of great persecution. It is a sure thing, the more it appears and is exemplified in the view of the world, the more will its honour, and the honour of its author, be advanced. Phil. i. 11. "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

The *third* use may be of *exhortation*, to seek those distinguishing qualifications and affections of soul which neither the devil, nor any unholy being, has or can have.

How excellent is that inward virtue and religion which consists in those! Herein consists the most excellent experiences of saints and angels in heaven. Herein consists the best experience of the man Christ Jesus, whether in his humbled or glorified state. Herein consists the image of God.—Yea, this is spoken of in Scripture as a communication of something of God's own beauty and excellency. A participation of the divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4. A partaking of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10. A partaking of Christ's fulness, John i. 16. Hereby the saints are filled with all the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 18, 19. Hereby they have fellowship with both the Father and the Son, 1 John i. 3. that is, they communicate with them in their happiness. Yea, by means of this divine virtue, there is a mutual indwelling of God and the saints; 1 John iv. 16. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

This qualification must render the person that has it excellent and happy indeed, and doubtless is the highest dignity and blessedness of any creature. This is the peculiar gift of God, which he bestows only on his special favourites. As to silver, gold, and diamonds, earthly crowns and kingdoms, he often throws them out to those whom he esteems as dogs and swine; but this is the peculiar blessing of his dear children. This is what flesh and blood cannot impart. God alone can bestow it. This was the special benefit which Christ died to procure for his elect, the most excellent token of his everlasting love; the chief fruit of his great labours, and the most precious purchase of his blood.

By this, above all other things, do men glorify God. By this, above all other things, do the saints shine as lights in the world, and are blessings to mankind. And this, above all things, tends to their own comfort; from hence arises that "peace which passeth all understanding," and that "joy which is unspeakable, and full of glory." And this is that which will most certainly issue in the eternal salvation of those who have it. It is impossible that the soul possessing it should sink and perish. It is an immortal seed; it is eternal life begun; and therefore they that have it can never die. It is the dawning of the light of glory. It is the day-star risen in the heart, that is a sure forerunner of that sun's rising which will bring on an everlasting day. This is that water which Christ gives,

which is in him that drinks it "a well of water springing up into everlasting life;" John iv. 14. It is something from heaven, of a heavenly nature, and tends to heaven. And those that have it, however they may now wander in a wilderness, or be tossed to and fro on a tempestuous ocean, shall certainly arrive in heaven at last, where this heavenly spark shall be increased and perfected, and the souls of the saints all be transformed into a bright and pure flame, and they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Amen.

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSERVATIONS

OR

IMPORTANT

THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS.

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PREFACE.

PRESIDENT EDWARDS has left many manuscript volumes of observations, on almost all subjects in divinity, which either occurred to him from his own meditation, or from the books he read. He wrote these volumes, not with any design they should ever be published in their present form, but that he might retain thoughts which appeared to him worth preserving, both for his own improvement, and for the instruction and edification of others. The judicious author of the life of this great and good man, gave his opinion, that, from these manuscripts, a number of volumes might be published, which, though more imperfect than if the Author had prepared them for public view, would afford much new light and entertainment to the church of Christ. The high and well-merited reputation, not only of the books prepared for the press of the President, but of the sermons published since his death, have occasioned many solicitations to his son, Dr. Edwards of Newhaven, to collect and print such part of those manuscripts as might be generally useful. In compliance with these requests, he has not grudged the labour of transcribing this volume of miscellanies, which, if it prove acceptable, will be followed by more, as the Doctor's health and leisure permit.

Many important and original thoughts occur, on the evidences of Revealed Religion.—Moral and religious knowledge only from revelation—Christ and his apostles taught not that the last judgment was near.—Jesus's prophecies, a proof that he was the Christ, and that he was God—Propriety of the general judgment—Reasonableness of some particular doctrines.—Miracles of Jesus not opposed by counterfeit miracles.—Miracles of Jesus superior to those under the Old Testament—Much instruction concisely conveyed by scripture metaphors.—Excellencies of scripture history.—The Propriety of gradual improvement in understanding the scriptures.—The Propriety of room being left for discovering truth by scripture consequences.—The necessity of divine revelation vindicated.—Jesus proved the Christ, from his destroying heathen idolatry according to scripture prophecy.... Propagation of Mohometanism not parallel to that of Christianity.—State of the Jewish nation, an evidence of revealed religion.—Observations on Christ's miracles.—Equally striking and judicious are many of the reflexions on the mysteries of revelation—On the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ.—Many therefore, who relish solid reasoning on religious subjects, though not adorned with the beauties of eloquence, will deem themselves much indebted to Dr. Edwards for gathering these fragments, that nothing might be lost.

Some, who have purchased and read Archbishop Tillotson's sermons, Stapferi *Theologia Polemica*, Bennet's *Inspiration of the Scriptures*, Grotius *de Veritate Religionis Christianæ*, Sir Isaac Newton's *Cronology*, *Religion of Jesus Delineated*, *Deism Revealed*, and Jones on the Canon,

may possibly wish that the *large quotations* from them had been omitted. But Dr. Edwards was advised to publish them, as they may prove an antidote to the deistical notions spreading in some parts of America, where these books are in few hands. These passages may lead some to read these books, who otherwise would not have known them. The President's originality of genius, and attachment to Calvinist principles, did not hinder his seeking and finding instruction in their writings, whose system of theology was very opposite to his. It were well, if in this he was imitated by all who possess distinguished talents, and who boast of liberality of sentiment.

JOHN ERSKINE.

Edin. Sept. 30, 1793.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THIS EDITION.

THE judiciousness of the "advice" given to Dr. Edwards, and with which he complied, may be justly questioned, respecting the "large quotations" referred to by Dr. Erskine, as they greatly swelled the publication, and thereby impeded the circulation of the President's original and very valuable thoughts. However, in the present edition of his works, it would be extremely improper to insert "long quotations" out of Tillotson, Jones on the canon, &c. indiscriminately, and without abridgement; not only because these authors are so common in England, compared with America, but also because it will be more satisfactory to the biblical student to consult the originals themselves, and to see the arguments in their proper connection. This equally applies to the senses of "Observations," and to that of the subsequent "Remarks." The latter of these were before cast into distinct chapters, and the former are now reduced to their proper heads, by which they acquire a more interesting aspect, and from the circumstance of an easy connection, an additional persuasive force.

It is certain that many of the original "Observations" and of the "Remarks on important Theological Controversies," were inserted in the author's common place book prior to the composition of some of his elaborate publications on the same subjects, when his thoughts appear in a more mature state, and in a more connected form. Of course, where the subjects coincided, he would avail himself of the substance of *such adversaria* in those treatises. On these grounds, independent of other considerations—and especially from a due regard to the author's reputation, which is deservedly high—it is obviously necessary, that a selection more choice and scrupulous be now made. And it may be confidently asserted that these two series, as they now stand, form a very valuable part of the author's work.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS

ON IMPORTANT

THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS,

ORIGINAL AND COLLECTED.

PART I.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FACTS AND EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY, AND THE OBJECTIONS OF INFIDELS.

CHAP. I.

General Observations.

§ 1. I suppose it will be acknowledged by the Deists, that the Christian religion is the most rational and pure that ever was established in any *society of men*; and that they will except only *themselves*, as serving God in a manner more according to the will, than the Christian manner. But can any believe that God has so wholly thrown away mankind, that there never yet has been a *society of men*, that have rightly paid respect to their Creator?

It is easily proved that the highest end and happiness of man, is to *view God's excellency*, to *love him*, and *receive expressions* of his love. This love, including all those other affections which depend upon, and are necessarily connected with it, we express in worship. The highest end of society among men, therefore, must be, to assist and join with each other in this employment. But how comes it to pass, that this end of society was never yet obtained among Deists?

Where was ever any social worship stately performed by them. And were they disposed socially to express their love and honour, which way would they go about it? They have nothing from God to direct them. Doubtless there would be perpetual dissensions about it, unless they were disposed to fall in with the Christian model. We may be convinced, therefore, that revelation is necessary to right *social worship*.

§ 2. There never was any religion but that which we profess, and those formed from it, that pretended to inform us of the nature of God, that there is but one God; how the world came into being, and how God governs it. What other religion discovered God's great designs; what is his will, and how he should be served? declared the reward of obedience and punishment of disobedience; the nature of man's happiness, and the end for which he was made? that gave us good moral rules; told us what will become of the world hereafter; explained how we came to be sinful and miserable, and how we may escape sin and misery? gave an account of the great revolutions of the world, and the successions of God's works in the universe; and where his true worshippers have been, and what has befallen them; or informed us how the world came to apostatize from the true worship of God? Christianity is the only religion that ever pretended that there should a time come, when it should be the religion of the world in general.

§ 3. The Jewish religion, as at present professed, most certainly differs from what reason evidently declares to be the essence of religion. It does not state aright the highest end and happiness of man, his chief business and greatest misery, and the true worship of God. Undoubtedly the Messiah was to come to advance the best interest and true happiness of mankind, which certainly consist in what the gospel declares our Jesus advanced, and not in what the Jews expect the Messiah will do.

§ 4. I think it certain, that seeing the miracles of Christ were done, for three years and a-half, so publicly all over Judea; and seeing there was such violent opposition there, so soon after, against the Christians; if the matters of fact had been false, they would have been denied by the Jews generally; and if this had been the case, we should have

known it. The Jews afterwards would much more have denied them; which it is evident they did not. If they had, they would have been also denied by the Heathens who wrote against the Christians. But they were not denied. It is impossible that the whole world should have turned Christian, in three hundred years after the facts were so publicly done, if they had been generally false. If the Jews had denied the matters of fact at first, they would undoubtedly have denied them at this day, seeing they are so tenacious of the traditions of their fathers. Christ's resurrection was openly published within a few days after his death, on the day of Pentecost. It is undoubted, that the number of the Christians increased every where exceedingly from that time; so that a considerable alteration was speedily made by it in the face of the world. Whether the matters of fact were written or no, they were universally talked of. The conversion of the Roman empire to the Christian religion, was the most remarkable thing that ever happened among the nations of the world; and it would be unaccountable that it should have happened upon the story of a few obscure men, without inquiring into the matters related.

§ 5. I am convinced of the necessity of a revelation, considering how negligent, dull, and careless about a future happiness, I should be, if I was left to discover that happiness by unassisted reason: especially if there were no revelation at all, about what is pleasing to God; how he accepts our services; after what manner he loves his servants; how he will pardon sin, &c.

§ 6. It is certain that Jesus Christ had none of the advantages of education, to get learning and knowledge; and it is also certain, that, every where in his speeches, he shewed an uncommon insight into things, a great knowledge of the true nature of virtue and morality, and what was most acceptable to God, vastly beyond the rest of the nation—take Scribes and Pharisees and all. And how did he come by it? how did he get it at Nazareth? Those who have not an education in these days, may get much by books, which are so common: but books of learning were not to be had then. Yea, it is evident that he knew vastly more than any of the philosophers and wise men in the whole world, by those rational descriptions which he gave of God and his attributes; of his government and providence; and of man's nature, business, end and happiness;

of what is pleasing to God; of the immortality of the soul, and a future state. How knew he, so exactly, truths perhaps demonstrable by reason, but never found out before? &c.

§ 7. That Christ was really dead, appears from many considerations. It is very unreasonable to imagine, that he feigned himself dead; for, what reason had he to think that he should have success, if he did? or to expect they would take him down before he was quite dead? Or, if he had had such a design, it was impossible that he should act his part so accurately, as not to be discovered or suspected. Besides, if he was not dead when they took him down from the cross, he was very near it; and, no doubt but his grievous wounds, the loss of blood, and fasting so long, would have extinguished his life before the third day. And if then he only rose out of a swoon, how came he perfectly sound at once? Doubtless, his hands and feet were much torn by bearing his weight so long on iron spikes driven through them. And if he rose from the dead in no supernatural sense, whither did he go when he rose? What became of him? We have no account of his dying again: nor was he yet to be found after a few weeks.

§ 8. If Christianity was not true, it would never afford so much matter for rational and penetrating minds to be exercised upon. If it were false, such minds would find it empty, and it would be a force upon the intellect to be set upon meditating upon *that* which has no other order, foundation, and mutual dependence to be discovered in its parts, than what is accidental. A strong and piercing mind would feel itself exceedingly bound and hindered. But in fact, there is the like liberty in the study of Christianity, and as much improvement of the mind, as in the study of natural philosophy, or any study whatsoever; yea, a great deal more. And whatever may be said about Mahometan divinity, I cannot be convinced but that a mind that has the faculty and habit of clear and distinct reasoning, would find nothing but chains, fetters, and confusion, if it should pretend to fix its reason upon it.

§ 9. Seeing the beauty of the corporeal world consists chiefly in representing spiritual beauties, and the beauties of minds are infinitely the greatest; we therefore may conclude, that God, when he created the world, shewed his own

perfection and beauties far the most charmingly and clearly, in the spiritual part of the world. But seeing spiritual beauty consists principally in virtue and holiness; and seeing there is so little of this beauty to be seen now on earth; hence we may fairly conclude, that there has been a great fall and defection in this part of the spiritual world, from its primitive beauty and charms.

Corollary. Seeing this is so agreeable to the account that the Christian religion gives of the matter; and seeing it is evident, by many arguments, that God intends not to give over man as lost, but has a merciful intention of restoring him to his primitive beauty; and seeing we are told this, and the manner of it, in the Christian religion alone; and seeing the account is so rational; it is a great confirmation of the truth of Christianity.

§ 10. It is a convincing argument for the truth of the Christian religion, and that it stands upon a most sure basis, that none have ever yet been able to prove it false, though there have been many men of all sorts, many fine wits and men of great learning, that have spent themselves, and ransacked the world for arguments against it, and this for many ages.

§ 11. It is exceedingly improbable, that it should ever enter into the head of any mortal, to invent such a strange system of visions, as that of the Revelation of St. John, of which he himself could give no account of the meaning or design, and did not pretend to it. What design could he have in it? But, if he had a design, the frame of the visions is not a whit like a random invention, without any view or design as to interpretation.

§ 12. It does not seem to me at all likely, that any person among the Jews, so long ago, should have so perfect a knowledge of nature, and the secret springs of human affections, as to be able to feign any thing so perfectly and exquisitely agreeable to nature, as the incidents in Joseph's history, and the other histories of the Bible; particularly the history of Genesis.

§ 13. Such kind of miracles as healing the sick, the blind, the deaf, dumb, lame, &c.; and creating bread and flesh, and turning water into wine, are greater, than those that are so much more pompous, as causing universal darkness,

dividing the sea, the shaking and burning of mount Sinai, &c. The healing of the sick and distracted, do more especially manifest divine power, for this cause, that we have reason to conclude mankind especially are subject to God's providence, and that their health and the exercise of their reason, are alone in his hands, and that it is not in the power of any evil spirit to give them and take them at his pleasure, however great power he may be supposed to have over the inanimate creatures.

When a person appears, that has evidently the whole course of nature at all times subject to his command, so that he can alter it how and when he pleases, we have the greatest reason to think *that* person has divine authority, and that the author and upholder of nature favours him, and gives approbation to what he pretends thereby. For we know, that the course of nature is God's established course of acting upon creatures; and we cannot think that he would give power to any evil spirit to alter it when he pleases, for evil purposes. But Christ manifestly had the course of nature so subject to his will and command.

§ 14. It would not have been proper for Christ constantly to dwell among men after his resurrection. Men would be exceedingly apt to fall into idolatry; and, because they *saw* the man Christ Jesus, would be apt to direct their worship to the *human* nature. Therefore we are not to see the man Christ Jesus till we are perfected, and are not liable to temptation on such occasions. For this reason, probably, it was not convenient for Christ to appear in great majesty and glory when on earth, but the contrary; for this reason, Christ endeavoured to hide his transfiguration, and many other miracles, till after he was risen; and for this reason, he did not converse constantly with his disciples after his resurrection, as before. All these things were done in a manner the most wise and fit that can be imagined.

§ 15. If human reason, by any thing that has happened since the creation, be really very much corrupted; and if God is still propitious, and does not throw us off, but reserves us for that end for which he made us; it cannot be imagined that he would leave us to our reason as the only rule to guide us in that business, which is the highest end of life: For it is not to be depended upon; and yet we exceedingly need something that may be depended upon, in reference to our

everlasting welfare. It does not seem to me reasonable to suppose, that if God be merciful after we have forfeited his favour, he will manifest his mercy only in some *mitigations* of that misery into which we have plunged ourselves, leaving us inevitably to endure the rest : but that he will quite restore us, in case of our acceptance of his offered favour.

§ 16. It seems much the most rational to suppose, that the universal law by which mankind are to be governed, should be a *written* law. For if that rule, by which God intends the world shall be regulated, and kept in decent and happy order, be supposed to be expressed no other way than by nature ; man's prejudices will render it, in innumerable circumstances, a most uncertain thing. For though " it must be granted, that men who are willing to transgress, may abuse written as well as unwritten laws, and expound them so as may best serve their turn upon occasion ; yet it must be allowed, that, in the nature of the thing, revelation is a better guard than a bare scheme of principles without it. For men must take more pains to conquer the sense of a standing, written law, which is ready to confront them upon all occasions. They must more industriously tamper with their passions, and blind their understandings, before they can bring themselves to believe what they have a mind to believe, in contradiction to the words of an express and formal declaration of God Almighty's will, than there can be any pretence or occasion for, when they have no more than their own thoughts and ideas to manage. These are flexible things, and a man may much more easily turn and wind them as he pleases, than he can evade a plain and positive law, which determines the kinds and measures of his duty, and threatens disobedience in such terms as require long practice and experience to make handsome salvos and distinctions to get over*." And upon this account also, that it is fit in every case, when the law is made known, that also the sanctions, the rewards and punishments, should be known at the same time. But nature could never have determined these with any certainty.

§ 17. Raising the dead to life, is given in the Old Testament, as a certain proof of the authority and mission of a prophet ; and that what he says is the truth. 1 Kings xvii. 24.

* Ditton on the Resurrection.

“And the woman said to Elijah, By this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.” So that if the Old Testament is the word of God, Jesus was a true prophet.

§ 18. The being of God is evident by the scriptures, and the scriptures themselves are an evidence of their own divine authority, after the same manner as the existence of a human thinking being is evident by the motions, behaviour and speech of a body animated by a rational mind. For we know this no otherwise, than by the consistency, harmony and concurrence of the train of actions and sounds, and their agreement to all that we can suppose to be in a rational mind. These are a clear evidence of understanding and design, which are the original of these actions. There is that universal harmony, consent, and concurrence in the drift, such an universal appearance of a wonderful and glorious design, such stamps every where of exalted wisdom, majesty and holiness, in matter, manner, contexture and aim; that the evidence is the same, that the scriptures are the word and work of a divine mind—to one that is thoroughly acquainted with them—as that the words and actions of an understanding man are from a rational mind. An infant, when it first comes into the world, sees persons act, and hears their voice, before it has so much comprehension as to see something of their consistence, harmony and concurrence. It makes no distinction between their bodies, and other things; their motions and sounds, and the motions and sounds of inanimate things. But as its comprehension increases, the understanding and design begin to appear. So it is with men that are as little acquainted with the scriptures, as infants with the actions of human bodies. They cannot see any evidence of a divine mind, as the original of it; because they have not comprehension enough to apprehend the harmony, wisdom, &c.

§ 19. Were it not for divine revelation, I am persuaded, that there is no one doctrine of that which we call natural religion, which, notwithstanding all philosophy and learning, would not be for ever involved in darkness, doubts, endless disputes, and dreadful confusion. Many things, now they are revealed, seem very plain. It is one thing, to see that a truth is exceedingly agreeable to reason, after we have had it explained to us, and have been told the reasons of it; and another, to find it out, and clearly and certainly to explain it by

mere reason. It is one thing, to prove a thing after we are shown how; and another, to find it out, and prove it of ourselves.

If there never had been any revelation, I believe the world would have been full of endless disputes about the very being of a God; whether the world was from eternity or not; and whether the form and order of the world did not result from the mere nature of matter. Ten thousand different schemes there would have been about it. And if it were allowed that there was a first cause of all things, there would have been endless disputes, and abundance of uncertainty, to determine what sort of a thing that first cause was. Some, it may be, would have thought that it was properly an intelligent mind and a voluntary agent. Others might say, that it was some principle of things, of which we could have no kind of ideas. Some would have called it a voluntary agent: some a principle exerting itself by a natural necessity. There might have been many schemes contrived about this, and some would like one best, and some another; and amongst those that held, that the original of all things was superior intelligence and will, there probably would have been everlasting doubts and disputes, whether there was one only, or more. Some perhaps would have said, there was but one; some that there were two; the one the principle of good, the other the principle of evil: others, that there was a society, or a world of them. And among those that held that there was but one mind, there would be abundance of uncertainty what sort of being he was; whether he was good or evil; whether he was just or unjust; holy or wicked; gracious or cruel; or whether he was partly good, and partly evil; and how far he concerned himself with the world, after he had made it; and how far things were owing to his providence, or whether at all; how far he concerned himself with mankind; what was pleasing to him in them, and what was displeasing; or whether he cared any thing about it, whether he delighted in justice and order or not; and whether he would reward the one, and punish the other; and how, and when, and where, and to what degree. There would have been abundance of doubt and dispute concerning what this mind expected from us, and how we should behave towards him; or whether he expected we should anywise concern ourselves with him: whether we ever ought to apply ourselves to him any way; whether we ought to speak to him, as expecting that he would take any notice of us: how we should shew our respect to him; whether we ought to

praise and commend him in our addresses; whether we ought to ask that of him which we need; whether or no he would forgive any, after they had offended him; when they had reason to think they were forgiven, and what they should do that they might be forgiven; and whether it is ever worth the while for them that are so often offending, to try for it; whether there were not some sins so great, that God never would upon any terms forgive them, and how great they must be in order to that. Men would be exceedingly at a loss to know when they were in favour with him, and upon what terms they could be in his favour. They would be in a dreadful uncertainty about a future state; whether there be any, and, if there be, whether it is a state of rewards and punishments; and if it is, what kind of state it is, and how men are to be rewarded and punished, to what degree, and how long; whether man's soul be eternal or not; and if it be, whether it is to remain in another world in a fixed state, or change often.

Every man would plead for the lawfulness of this or that practice, just as suited his fancy, and agreed with his interest and appetites; and there would be room for a great deal of uncertainty and difference of opinion among those that were most speculative and impartial. There would be uncertainty, in a multitude of instances, what was just, and what unjust. It would be very uncertain how far self-interest should govern men, and how far love to our neighbour; how far revenge would be right, and whether or no a man might hate his neighbour, and for what causes: what degree of passion and ambition was justifiable and laudable: what sensual enjoyments were lawful, and what not: how far we ought to honour, respect and submit to our parents, and other superiors: how far it would be lawful to dissemble and deceive. It seems to me, there would be infinite confusion in these things; and that there would hardly be any such thing as conscience in the world.

The world has had a great deal of experience of the necessity of a revelation; we may see it in all ages, that have been without a revelation. In what gross darkness and brutal stupidity have such places, in these matters, always been overwhelmed! and how many, and how great and foolish mistakes, and what endless uncertainty and differences of opinion have there been among the most learned and philosophical! Yet there never was a real trial how it would be with mankind in this respect, without having any thing from revelation. I believe that most of those parts of natural religion, that were

held by the heathens before Christ, were owing to tradition from those of their forefathers who had the light of revelation. And many of those being most evidently agreeable to reason, were more easily upheld and propagated. Many of their wise men who had influence and rule over them, saw their rectitude and agreeableness to reason better than others. Some of them travelled much, and those things which appeared most agreeable to their reason, they transplanted to their own country. Judea was a sort of light among the nations, though they did not know it. The practice and principles of that country kept the neighbouring nations in remembrance of traditions, which *they* had from their forefathers; and so kept them from degenerating so much as otherwise they would have done. In fact, the philosophers had the foundation of most of their truths, from the ancients, or from the Phœnicians, or what they picked up here and there of the reliques of revelation.

How came all the heathen nations to agree in the custom of sacrificing? The light of nature did not teach it them; without doubt they had it from tradition; and therefore, it needs not seem strange, that what of natural religion they had amongst them, came the same way. I am persuaded, that mankind would have been like a herd of beasts, with respect to their knowledge in all important truths, if there never had been any such thing as revelation in the world; and that they never would have risen out of their brutality. We see, that those who live at the greatest distance from revelation, are far the most brutish. The heathens in America, and in some of the utmost parts of Asia and Africa, are far more barbarous than those who formerly lived in Rome, Greece, Egypt, Syria and Chaldea. Their traditions are more worn out, and they are more distant from places enlightened with revelation. The Chinese, descended probably from the subjects of Noah, that holy man, have held more by tradition from him, than other nations, and so have been a more civilized people. The increase of learning and philosophy in the Christian world, is owing to revelation. The doctrines of revealed religion, are the foundation of all useful and excellent knowledge. The word of God leads barbarous nations into the way of using their understandings. It brings their minds into a way of reflecting and abstracted reasoning; and delivers from uncertainty in the first principles, such as, the being of God, the dependence of all things upon him, being subject to his influence and providence, and being ordered by his wisdom. Such

principles as these, are the basis of all true philosophy, as appears more and more, as philosophy improves. Revelation delivers mankind from that distraction and confusion, which discourages all attempts to improve in knowledge. Revelation actually gives men a most rational account of religion and morality, and the highest philosophy, and all the greatest things that belong to learning, concerning God, the world, human nature, spirits, providence, time and eternity. Revelation not only gives us the foundation and first principles of all learning, but it gives us the *end*, the only end, that would be sufficient to move man to the pursuit.

Revelation redeems nations from a vicious, sinful, and brutish way of living, which will effectually keep out learning. It is therefore unreasonable to suppose, that philosophy might supply the defect of revelation. Knowledge is easy to us that understand by revelation; but we do not know what brutes we should have been, if there never had been any revelation.

§ 20. As Moses was so intimately conversant with God, and so continually under the divine conduct, it cannot be thought, that when he wrote the history of the creation and fall of man, and the history of the church from the creation, he should not be under the divine direction in such an affair.

§ 21. It is certainly necessary, that, in the word of God, we should have a history of the life of Christ, of his incarnation, his death, his resurrection and ascension, and his actions, and of the instructions he gave the world.

If God expects that we shall receive any New Testament at all, we must suppose that God's providence would be concerned in this matter. God took this care with respect to the books of the Old Testament, that no books should be received by the Jewish church, and delivered down in the canon of the Old Testament, but what were his word, and owned by Christ. We may therefore conclude, that he would still take the same care of his church, with respect to the New Testament.

§ 22. It seems to me an unaccountable dulness, that when intelligent men read David's psalms, and other prayers and songs of the Old Testament, they are not at once convinced, that the Jews had the true worship and communion of the One great and holy God; and that no other nation upon earth had them. It seems as clear as the sun at noon-day; and so

indeed from all the histories and prophecies of the Old Testament.

§ 23. We need not wonder at all, that God should so often reveal himself by prophets and miracles, to the Israelitish nation, and that now we should see nothing of this nature; for this way of revealing himself is not at all suitable to the present state of the church. The church was *then* confined to one particular nation, that God chose on purpose to make them the receptacle of his revelation, and the conveyancer of it to the rest of the world. And I can think of no other way that it could be done with any tolerable convenience, but by a chosen peculiar nation, that should alone be God's people, and have the true religion among them. Therefore, it was highly convenient and necessary, that there should be such a manner of communication, with such a nation. It was also necessary, in the first *transition* of this revelation from the Jews to the world, as it was in the apostles times, that the world receiving this revelation from them, might see God still revealing himself; and so might receive it from God, in the same manner as *they* received it. But that God should now reveal himself after that manner to his church, is no way necessary, nor at all suitable to the gospel state of the church, which is not any particular inclosure, but is dispersed through the whole world. How is it practicable that God should treat with the church now, in such a way as he did with that peculiar nation? Besides, if it were practicable, it would be very inexpedient; for, what need of new revelations to the end of the world? Is it not better that God should give the world a book, that should be the summary of his will, to which all nations in all ages may resort? Prophecy and miracles are nothing without charity; like the shadow without the substance: and seeing the substance is come, what need the shadow should be continued? Seeing the end is come, it would be impertinent still to continue the means. The church now enjoys that glory, in comparison with which all the glory of prophecy and miracles, even those of that extraordinary prophet Moses, is no glory at all, 2 Cor. iii. 10.

§ 24. If there be any such thing needful, or at all proper and suitable, that God should reveal himself to mankind; it is perhaps impossible that he should do it in any other way, or with any other kind of evidence, than he has done it. No

kind of miracle can be thought of, that would be more evidential, than those by which Christianity has been confirmed.

§ 25. It is no argument against the reality of the incarnation of Jesus Christ—whereby God became the same person with a man—that there is nothing else like it any where to be seen; because it was evidently God's design to shew his wisdom, by doing a thing that was, and for ever would have been, far beyond the thoughts of any creatures. Man's fall was God's opportunity to shew how far his contrivance and wisdom was beyond that of all creatures.

§ 26. It was often prophesied among the children of Israel, that the gods of the nations round about, should perish from off the earth; and that they should cease to be acknowledged and worshipped: but that the worship and acknowledgment of *their* God should remain for ever, and should, in due time, take place of those others. Jer. x. 11. "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." This came to pass by means of the Christian religion. It is Christ's appearing, and the preaching of his doctrine in the world, that has been the means of it all. It is by means of these, that the Mahometan parts of the world came to acknowledge the One God: and it is by these means, that even the deists come to it.—Again, it has been only by means of Jesus Christ's appearing and teaching, that the world ever came to have any clear, distinct, and rational notions about a future state; notions every way agreeable to reason.

It is a confirmation that God designed the Christian religion should succeed the Jewish; that, speedily after the introduction of the Christian religion, God, in his providence, by the destruction of the temple, and dispersion of the Jewish nation, made that religion impracticable. It was prophesied of old, that God should be acknowledged and worshipped by other nations, and that other nations were to be God's people. Therefore, there was a religion to succeed the Jewish, very different as to external worship; because the Jewish religion was not fitted for more than a single nation: nor is it practicable by the world in general. But the Christian religion is exceedingly fitted for universal practice.

§ 27. There are these things remarkable in Christ's raising Lazarus from the dead, John xi. viz. that he called

upon God, before he did it, to do it for him; and thanked him that he had heard him; and told him, that he knew that he heard him always: and when he spake to him, he called him Father; and told him, that he spake to him for that end, that others that stood by, when they should see that what he asked of him, was granted in such an extraordinary thing, might believe that he sent him. Now, can it be imagined, that God would thus hear an impostor?

§ 28. It is an evidence that the apostles had their doctrine from inspiration of some invisible guide and instructor, that there was such a vast and apparent difference made in them at once after Pentecost. They were illiterate, simple, undesigning, ignorant men before; but afterward, how do they express themselves in their speeches and epistles! they do not speak as being in the least at a loss about the scheme of salvation, and the gospel mysteries. With what authority do they teach! in how learned and intelligent a manner! How came Saul by his scheme, and by all his knowledge of the Christian doctrines and mysteries immediately upon his conversion?

§ 29. Christ joined pardoning sins with his healing the sick. When one came to be healed, he first told him, that his sins were forgiven; and when the Jews found fault that he should pretend to forgive sins, then, immediately, he heals the person's disease, that they might believe that he had the power to forgive sins, and tells them that he does it for this end. Mat. ix. 2.; Mark ii. 3.; Luke v. 18. Now, if Christ were an impostor, can it be believed, that God would so countenance such horrid blasphemy as this would be, to enable him to cure the disease by a word speaking, a work which God appropriates to himself as his own, Ps. ciii. 3. Would God give an impostor this attestation to a blasphemous lie, when he pretended to do it as an attestation to his divine mission?

§ 30. Christ, by the works which he wrought, shewed that he had an absolute and sovereign power over the course of nature, and over the spiritual and invisible world, and over the bodies and souls of men. It was not so with other prophets; they could not work what miracles they pleased, and when they pleased. They could work miracles, only when they were excited and directed to it by a special command

or impulse from heaven. But Christ wrought them as of his own power at all times. Men came to him, under the notion that he was able; and Christ required that they should believe in order to it; to which never any prophet pretended. Moses was shut out of the land of Canaan, partly for working a miracle in his own name, and not sanctifying the Lord God. "Must we fetch water out of this rock?" The prophets never pretended that they themselves had properly any power to work miracles; but disclaimed it. God never subjected the course of nature to them, to work miracles by their own word and command upon all occasions. Care was taken in all the miracles wrought by the prophets, that it should be visible, that what was done, was done only by God; and that what they said or did, upon which the miracle was wrought, was by particular revelation from heaven. They who came to Christ, that he might work miracles for them, did it in the faith, that by his own power and holiness he was able to do it for them. The leper said, Mat. viii. 2. "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." He believed that Christ could work miracles, when he would. This, Christ approved of. Mat. viii. 8. "But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Mat. ix. 18. "My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thine hand on her, and she shall live." Matt. ix. 28. "Believe ye that I am able to do this? they said unto him, Yea, Lord." Matt. ix. 21. "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." In Mat. xvi. 9.; Christ reproves his disciples, because they were afraid of wanting bread, not remembering how he had fed multitudes in the wilderness: which implies, that he was able to do the like again when he pleased. He cast out devils as of his own power and authority; Mark. i. 27. "With authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him." And Christ, as having power of his own to work miracles, gave power to his disciples, as Matt. x.; Mark iii. 14. and vi. 7. &c.; and Luke ix. and x.; and so miracles were wrought in Christ's name, by the apostles, and many other disciples. Moses did not in the least pretend to any such thing. But Christ did pretend, and he declares himself fellow with God in working; John v. 17. "My father worketh hitherto, and I work."

§ 31. If there must be a revelation, it is convincing, that the Christian revelation is the true one; that it has been by means of this revelation, and this only, that the world has come

to the knowledge of the one only true God. Till this came, all the world lay in ignorance of him. But when this came, it was successful to bring the world to the acknowledgment of him. If there be a true revelation in the world, it is not to be supposed, that by a false one, an imposture, the world should come to the knowledge of the true God. If the Christian revelation be not the proper means to bring the world to the knowledge of the true God, it is strange that the world, which was before ignorant of him, should be brought to the knowledge of him by it; and no part part of it ever be brought to the knowledge of him by any other means.

§ 32. It is an argument for the truth of the Christian revelation, that there is nothing else that informs us, what God designs by that series of revolutions and events that are brought to pass in the world; what end he seeks, and what scheme he has laid out; agreeably to the challenge which God makes to the gods, and prophets, and teachers of the heathen world, Isa. xli. 22, 23. It is most fit, that the intelligent beings of the world should be made acquainted with it. The thing that is God's great design, is something concerning them; and the revolutions by which it is to be brought to pass, are revolutions among them, and in their state. The state of the inanimate, unperceiving part of the world, is nothing regarded any otherwise, than in a subserviency to the perceiving and intelligent part. And it is most rational to suppose, that God should reveal the design he has been carrying on, to his rational creatures; that, as God has made them capable of it, they may actively fall in with and promote it, acting herein as the subjects and friends of God.—The Christian revelation is a design most worthy of an infinitely wise, holy, and perfect being.

§ 33. The doctrine of the general resurrection at the end of the world, upon many accounts, seems to me a most credible doctrine. There are a multitude of resemblances of it in nature and providence, which, I doubt not, were designed on to be types of it. It seems credible on this account, that the work of the Redeemer is wholly a restoring work from beginning to end; and that he would repair all the ruins brought on the world by sin.

§ 34. If the New Testament be not a divine revelation, then God never yet has given the world any clear revelation of a future state. But if a revelation be needful upon any account, it is that we may have some certain and distinct know-

ledge of the future invisible world. If God designed a true revelation, it is not probable that he would suffer that any false revelation should anticipate it, and do the work beforehand. And, upon many other accounts that might be mentioned, it is incredible that the true revelation should still be deferred.

§ 35. It is very unreasonable to make it an objection against the Christian revelation, that it contains some things that are very mysterious and difficult to our understandings, and that seem to us impossible. If God will give us a revelation from heaven of the very truth, concerning his own nature, acts, counsels, and ways, and of the spiritual and invisible world; it is unreasonable to expect any other, than that many things in such a revelation should be utterly beyond our understanding. For, was there ever a time, when, if there had been a revelation of the very truth in philosophical matters—concerning created things, which are of a vastly lower nature, and must be supposed more proportioned to our understandings—there would not have appeared many things; not only to the vulgar, but to the learned of that age, absurd and impossible? If many of those positions in philosophy, which are now received by the learned world as indubitable truths, had been revealed from heaven to be truths in past ages, they would have seemed as impossible as the most mysterious Christian doctrines do now. I believe, that if, even now, there should come a revelation from heaven of what is the very truth in these matters, without deviating at all to accommodate it to our received notions and principles, there would be many things in it that would seem absurd and contradictory. I now receive principles as certain, which once, if they had been told me, I should have regarded as difficult as any mystery in the Bible. Without doubt, much of the difficulty that we have about the doctrines of Christianity, arises from wrong principles that we receive. We find that those things which are received as principles in one age, and are never once questioned, are yet exploded in another age, as light increases. If God make a revelation to us, he must reveal to us the truth as it is, without accommodating himself to our notions and principles; which would indeed be impossible: for those things which are our received notions in one age, are contrary to what are so in another; and the word of God was not given for any particular age, but for all ages. It surely becomes us to receive what God reveals to be truth, and to look upon his word as proof

sufficient; whether what he reveals squares with our notions or not.

I rather wonder that the word of God contains no more mysteries in it; and I believe it is because God is so tender of us, and reveals only such things as he sees that man, though so weak a creature, if of an humble and an honest mind, can well enough bear. Such tenderness we see in Christ towards his disciples; he had many things to say, but forbore, because they could not bear them yet. Though God does not depart from truth to accommodate himself to our manner of thinking, yet I believe he accommodates himself to our way of understanding, in his manner of expressing and representing things; as we are wont to do, when teaching little children.

§ 36. What can be more reasonable, than to believe a man, when he tells us, that he is sent from God to heal the diseases of our souls, and, in order that we may believe him, heals all sorts of men, of all manner of diseases, by a touch or a word; and plainly shows that he can do it when he will, and let the disease be what it will? He tells us, that he will deliver us from spiritual and eternal death; that he will raise us from the dead, and give us eternal life; so that we shall live for ever, and not die: and to prove this, he gives evidence that he has power over men's lives, by restoring them after they are dead; and rises from the dead himself. He tells us, that he will bestow heavenly glory upon us; and will translate us to heaven: and, to confirm us in this belief, tells us, that we shall see himself, after his death, ascend into heaven. What more could we desire? He tells us that he will undertake for us, and appear for us before God; and that we need not doubt, if he pleads for us, he shall procure acceptance, and, that we may see that it is true, he asks of God concerning a man who had been dead four days, that he may come to life again; and tells God, that he asks it for this end, that we may see that he always hears him, and grants what he requests: and accordingly, at his request, the dead man comes to life.

§ 37. "What argument more proper (says Dr. Tillotson) to convince them of another life after this, than to see a man raised from the dead and restored to a new life? What fitter to satisfy a man concerning heaven and the happy state of those there, than to see one visibly taken up into heaven? And what more fit to assure us that the promises of the gospel are real, and shall be made good to us, than to see him who

made those promises to us, raise himself from the dead, and go up into heaven, and from thence dispense miraculous gifts abroad in the world, as evidences of the power and authority with which he is invested? All the philosophical arguments which a man can bring for the soul's immortality and another life, will have no force upon vulgar apprehensions, in comparison of these sensible demonstrations, which give an experiment of the thing, and furnish us with an instance of something of the same kind, and of equal difficulty with that which is propounded to our belief."

§ 38. Why was not Christ, after he rose from the dead, during his stay upon earth, with his disciples, as he was before? The very different states that Christ and his disciples were now in, would not allow of it. Christ, before his death, while in his humiliation, was in a like state with them. He was subject to hunger and thirst, as they were; he needed sleep as they did; he needed the like defence from the weather that they did, and the like: But when he was risen from the dead, the case was exceedingly altered; he then began his exaltation. He put off mortality, and all the infirmities of his body. The nature of his body was different from theirs, as things celestial differ from things terrestrial. Mortal beings are not apt for a colhabitation with immortal; nor terrestrial with celestial; nor corruption with incorruption. God will not thus mix and confound heaven and earth.

§ 39. Much of the scriptures is apt to seem insipid to us now, as though there were no great matter of instruction in it; because the points of instruction most plainly contained in it, are old to us, and what we have been taught from our infancy. The doctrines are so plain to us now, that there seems to have been no need of a particular revelation of such things; especially of insisting upon them so much. But how exceedingly different would it have seemed if we had lived in those times when the revelation was given, when the things were in a great measure new, at least as to that distinctness and expressiveness of their revelation? If we had an idea of the state of the world, when God gave the revelation, they would appear glorious instructions, bringing great light into the world, and most worthy of God.

§ 40. It was not allowed under the Old Testament, to hate personal enemies, to wish for revenge, or to pray for their

hurt; except as speaking in the name of the Lord. So that there is no inconsistency between the religion of the Old Testament and New, in this respect. The apostle Paul himself doth thus imprecate vengeance on his enemies; 2 Tim. iv. 14. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works." Revenge, or a desire of it, was forbidden by the law of Moses, Levit. xix. 18.; yea, there, the love of our enemy is implicitly commanded. Doing good to enemies, is required, Exod. xxiii. 45. "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou seest the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." And this was agreeable to the sense of the saints of those times, as appears from Job xxxi. 29. "If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him." Prov. xxiv. 17. "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, nor let thine heart be glad when he stumbleth." And, xvii. 5. "He that is glad at calamities, shall not go unpunished." We cannot think that those imprecations we find in the Psalms and Prophets, were out of their own hearts; for cursing is spoken of as a very dreadful sin in the Old Testament; and David, whom we hear oftener than any other praying for vengeance on his enemies, by the history of his life, was of a spirit very remote from spiteful and revengeful. He himself in the Psalms gives us an account of his wishing well to his enemies, and doing good to them, Psalm vii. 4.; praying for them, and grieving at their calamities, Psalm xxxv. 13, 14. And some of the most terrible imprecations that we find in all the Old Testament, are in the New spoken of as prophetic, even those in the 109th Psalm; as in Acts i. 20. Jer. xii. 3. We have instances of this kind even in the apostles and the disciples of the Lamb of God, as 2 Tim. iv. 14. Peter says to Simon Magus, "Thy money perish with thee." They wish them ill, not as personal, but as public enemies to the church of God. Sometimes what they say is in the name of the church, see Jer. v. 34, 35.; Mat. i. 19. "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily." This is a remarkable and eminent instance of a Christian spirit; and this verse is an evidence, that *that* meekness, gentleness, forgiveness, and kindness to enemies which the gospel prescribes, were duties under the law, and before Christ came.

§ 41. I once told a boy of about thirteen years of age, that a piece of any matter two inches square, was eight times as large as one of but one inch square; or that it might be cut into eight pieces, all of them as big as that of but one inch square. He seemed at first not to think me in earnest, and to suspect that I only meant to make game of him. But when I had taken considerable pains to convince him that I was in earnest, and that I knew what I said to be true; he seemed to be astonished at my positiveness; and exclaimed about the impossibility and absurdity of it; and would argue, how was it possible for two inches to be eight inches! and all that I could say, did not prevail upon him, to make him believe it. I suppose it seemed to him as great a contradiction, that what was but just twice so long, and twice so broad, and twice so thick, should yet be eight times so big; as that twice one should make eight, or any other absurdity whatsoever. And when I afterwards shewed him the truth of it, by cutting out two cubes, one an inch, and another two inches square; and let him examine the measures, and see that the measures were exact, and that there was no deceit; and cut the two inch cube into eight equal parts, and he counted the parts over and over, and took the parts one by one and compared them with the one inch cube, and spent some time in counting and comparing; he seemed to be astonished, as though there were some witchcraft in the case; and hardly to believe it after all. For he did not yet at all see the reason of it. I believe it was a much more difficult mystery to him, than the Trinity ordinarily is, to men: and seemed to him more evidently a contradiction, than any mystery of religion to a Socinian or Deist.

§ 42. Some may be ready to object against the Christian religion, that there seem to be innumerable difficulties and inconsistencies attending it, but that a multitude of heads have been employed for many ages, till at length such solutions have been found out for many of them, as are in some measure plausible:

To this I answer, That as there has been a long time to answer objections, so there has been a long time to strengthen them. As there have been many ages to solve difficulties, so there have been as many to find out difficulties and inconsistencies. Besides, there has been all this time to make difficulties more plain, and bring out inconsistencies more to the light; and by thorough and exact consideration to make them

more manifest and apparent. Time wonderfully brings truth to light, and wears off by degrees false colourings and disguises. The truth will always have most advantage by time. Appearing inconsistencies, being well founded, will grow plainer and plainer, and difficulties more and more evident. Time will discover more circumstances to strengthen and confirm them, and so pretences of solution will appear more and more evidently absurd and ridiculous. When parties contend by argument and inquiry, time greatly helps that party which has truth on its side, and weakens the contrary. It gradually wears away the sandy foundation, and rots away the building that is not made of substantial materials. The Christian religion has evermore, in all ages, had its enemies, and that among learned men. Yea, it is observable, that there have commonly been some of the most subtle of men to scan the Christian scheme, and to discover the objections that lie against it, and have done it with a good will to overthrow it.— Thus it was in Judea, in the infancy of the church. The Scribes and Pharisees, and the wise men among the Jews, employed all their wisdom against it. Thus, in the first ages of the church, not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble were called. Christianity had the wisdom, learning and subtilty of the world to oppose it. In latter ages, how many learned and subtle men have done their utmost against Christianity? So that the length of time for persons to strengthen their own side in this controversy, brought as an objection against Christianity, is much more an argument for it, than an objection against it.

§ 43. If there be a revelation from God to the world, it is most reasonable to suppose, and natural to expect, that he should therein make known not only what manner of being he is, but also that he should lead mankind to an understanding of his works of creation and providence. These things the Christian revelation opens to us in such a manner as might be expected. This alone gives any tolerable account of the work of creation, and this reveals to us the scheme of providence, and what is God's main design in the whole, a design worthy of himself. And we are shewn how these events all point to this main work of Power, Wisdom, and Grace. We have a particular account how this greatest work has actually been wrought in the fulness of time, as to those great acts which are the main ground of it; and how that was foretold in the several ages of the world.

These things are exceedingly agreeable to a rational supposition, in case God makes a revelation to mankind. But if the scriptures are not a revelation of God, then man, the principal creature God has made in this world, the only intelligent creature, to whom he has subjected this lower part of the creation, is left wholly and entirely in the dark about God's works both of creation and providence, and has nothing whereby to judge what God's scheme is, in all the great changes he sees come to pass in the world, or what he aims to accomplish. Every thing lies in darkness and confusion before him, without any possibility of his determining any thing, or to direct him what to think of God's works which he beholds, or what affections he should exercise towards the Supreme Governor, on occasion of them.

CHAP. II.

The objection concerning the Apostles' apprehensions of the second coming of Christ answered.

§. 1. WITH respect to that objection against the truth of the Christian religion, That the apostles seem often to speak of the coming of Christ to judgment, as if they thought it near at hand; I will begin with what the apostle Paul says that may have such appearance.—In the first epistle to the Thesalonians, which is reckoned to be the first of his epistles in the order of time; and particularly ch. iv. 15—17. he says, “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that *we which are alive*, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep: for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then *we which are alive and remain*, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord.” He speaks of those that should then be alive, in the first person plural; and of those that should be asleep, in the third person. Thus it would have been more natural for him to have said, They which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent *us*, who shall then be asleep.—And in the 17th verse, Then they which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with *us*.

§ 2. Considering the scope of the apostle in these verses, all that can be inferred from such a manner of speaking, is, that it might, for ought was then revealed, be while they lived. For the scope of the apostle was to comfort the Thessalonians concerning their friends that were already dead, with the consideration, that they should surely meet them again, at the day of the Lord's coming. And therefore, it was most proper and natural for the apostle to speak of them in the third person. And it is but just to suppose, that it was only the uncertainty of the time, that was the ground of the apostle's using such a manner of expression; because he, in this very context, speaks of the time as altogether uncertain; as it follows immediately in the beginning of the next chapter, "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you: for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," &c. The apostle, by the expression he uses, probably had in his mind those words of Christ in Acts i. 7. "It is not for you to know the *times and seasons*, which the Father hath put in his own power."

§ 3. We have an instance of a like nature with this, in the words of Joseph to his brethren, Gen. l. 25. "God will surely visit *you*, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." He does not say, God shall visit your *posterity*, and *they* shall carry up my bones from hence. Yet it cannot be argued, that Joseph concluded that the redemption out of Egypt, would be in that generation.

So the nature and design of the apostle's discourse, necessarily gave him to distinguish between those that should be alive at Christ's coming, and the deceased relations of the Christian Thessalonians. He speaks of them as already dead, and of their now living friends then meeting them risen from the dead.—That the apostle did not intend to be understood, as though it were certain that Christ would come while they were living; is evident, from what he himself says, speaking of those very words, and expressly denying that he intended any such thing; or that he supposed it to be certain, that the coming of Christ was at hand, in any such sense. See 2 Thess. ii. 1—3. where he very earnestly warns them not to understand him in any such sense, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from

us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means ; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition," &c.

§ 5. Now, it is evident, that the apostle does not thus write to them the *second* time, endeavouring to retract any thing he had written before ; but it must be because he really did not intend so at first ; for this epistle was written soon after the other, while the same fellow-labourers were with him.— And both have been supposed to be written, while the apostle abode in Athens, as appears by the postscripts. And if we well observe the contents of this and the foregoing epistle, the principal occasion of the apostle's writing the second so soon after the other, seems to have been an information he had received, that his former epistle had been misunderstood in this particular : and being much concerned about it, and fearing the ill consequences of such a misunderstanding, he writes to guard them from the mischief of such a mistake, and to establish them in it, that it is uncertain when the Lord will come, as he had told them before in his other epistle. And he argues the great uncertainty there was, whether it would be in that age or not, from what the Holy Ghost had revealed about the coming of Antichrist.

§ 6. That this apostle did not expect Christ's coming in that generation, may be argued from his speaking as though he expected that those that were then alive, would *rise from the dead* at Christ's second coming, as in 1 Cor. vi. 14. " And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also *raise up us* by his own power." And, 2 Cor. iv. 14. " Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall *raise up us* also by Jesus, and shall present us with you."

§ 7. From what the apostle says in this second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians, there appears a *necessity*, that those passages in any other of his epistles, that look as though he expected that Christ would come in that age, should be understood in some other sense ; and that the apostle really did not mean so, as his words on a cursory view would lead us to suppose. For here the apostle is very express, and full, and earnest in it, that he would by no means be so understood. It is a farther evidence, that those passages in other epistles must be understood in some other sense,

that there are passages in this very epistle, particularly in the first chapter, that we should be ready to think had such a look, were it not that the apostle himself, immediately in the second chapter, denies any such meaning.

§ 8. In this sense we must understand those passages, in which it is spoken of as a duty of Christians, to look and wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus; as, Titus ii. 13. 1 Cor. i. 7. Philip. iii. 20. There is a necessity of understanding, in like manner, the following passages—which were all written after this to the Thessalonians—Rom. xiii. 11, 12. “And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent; *the day is at hand*. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” We cannot understand this as though the apostle concluded, the day of judgment would come while they lived; because he had before explained himself otherwise: but only that the day of Christ's kingdom, which is the day of the salvation of the church of Christ, was at hand. And so, Philip. iv. 5. “Let your moderation be known to all men: *the Lord is at hand*.” And Heb. x. 25. “Exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see *the day approaching*.”

§ 9. Christ's coming was indeed at hand in many respects; and in such respects as might well have all that influence upon those to whom the apostle wrote that he intended. The coming of Christ at the overthrow of the heathen empire, might well be said to be at hand; and Christ's last coming to judgment, might well, considering all things, be said to be at hand, as the apostle Peter observes, though there should be thousands of years between. The apostle Paul speaks of ages to come, Eph. ii. 7. That it was not to be till many generations were past: yet it was at hand, in a sense agreeable to the common language of the Holy Spirit. So, Christ's first coming was spoken of as very nigh at hand, of old. Hagg. ii. 6, 7. “For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, *it is a little while*, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts:” Yet there was then above 500 years to it. And when it was about 400 years, it is said, Mal. iii. 1. “The Lord whom ye seek, shall *suddenly* come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye

delight in." And when it was about 700 years to the gospel day, it is said to be but a *very little while*. Isai. xxxix. 17, 18. "It is not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." So God represents, as though he would *very quickly* perform all the things prophesied of by Jeremiah, though some of them were not to be fulfilled in many ages; Jer. i. 10—12. So the time is said to be *at hand*, for the accomplishment of all the prophecies of the book of Revelation, and Christ's last coming at the conclusion of them; Rev. i. 3. and xxii. 7, 10, 12, 20; though the book evidently contains a series of events of many ages.

§ 10. Again, when the apostle Peter says, with respect to Christ's last coming, and its being said to be *at hand*, that "a thousand years in God's sight are but as one day," it is no new conceit of his own, to save reputation; but God's language that he had used of old justifies him in so saying. And the expression that the apostles used about the approach of Christ's coming, did not tend to the disappointment of God's people. For Christ's coming to reward them at death was at hand, when they should have such a comfortable and full prospect of their complete reward at Christ's last coming; so that they shall anticipate, and as it were have a possession of it. Though the time appears long to us in our dim-sighted state, yet it will appear as nothing to them. The second coming of Christ was so nigh at hand, that the church of God might well take all that comfort from what was really to be understood by those expressions. The first coming of Christ was very often spoken of for the comfort of the saints of the Old Testament, under great afflictions, though they never were like to see it in this life-time. So in the case of Zerubabel, and Joshua and Daniel.

§ 11. As to that text of the apostle in 1 Cor. x. 11. "And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the *ends of the world* are come;" the connection of these words with the context, and the drift of the apostle explain his meaning. For his drift is only this, that what had happened to the children of Israel in the wilderness, happened to them for ensamples, and were written for our sakes, though they happened so long ago, or though we live so long after them, and,

with respect to them, in the ends of the world, or in the latter part of the world's duration, called the latter days.

§ 12. As to 1 Pet. iv. 7. "The end of all things is *at hand*:" how did this same apostle explain this propinquity? 2 Pet. iii. 7, 8. "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And it is to be considered, that the apostle Peter was under no temptation to change his voice in this matter, from any experience of the events failing as yet. He had not lived long enough to prove, but that Christ's words—whence any may suppose they might expect Christ's second coming before the generation passed away, and before some that were then present should taste of death—might be fulfilled in that sense.

§ 13. That there was no such notion prevailing among the disciples, that Christ should come while most of them lived, is manifest from this, that when the disciples mistook the design of Christ's words, John xxi. 22. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" and from thence, for a while, entertained a notion that *that* disciple was not to die till Christ came; it seems they, even while under this mistake, looked upon it as the distinguishing privilege of that disciple, which none of the rest were to expect. And it is evident, that John himself concluded no such thing, as that Christ should come in his life-time, because he speaks of that notion of the other disciples about him as ill-founded.

§ 14. It is a further argument, that, when the apostles used such kind of language as that, "the Lord is *at hand*," &c. they did not use it in any such sense, as that it should be in that age or the next; that the apostle John, who was accustomed to their language, uses it still, even after he had prophesied of many great events, which plainly were to have their accomplishment in many successive ages. As Rev. ii. 11; "Behold I come *quickly*." And he uses it repeatedly at the end of the book, after he had given an account of those future events, in the last chapter, ver. 7. "Behold I come *quickly*;" ver. 12. "Behold I come *quickly*;" and ver. 20. "He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come *quickly*."

The xvii. chap. of this book alone, is sufficient to convince any one, that John could not suppose that his prophecies could be fulfilled, but in several successive ages.

§ 15. It is an argument, that such a nearness of Christ's last coming as the objection supposes was not the doctrine that the apostles so much insisted upon; that the church prevailed still, when they saw that Christ did not come. Such a disappointment would have been a dreadful blow to Christianity, if this had been the universal expectation of Christians, and it had been raised by the abundant promises of Christ and his apostles. They probably, upon it, would have exceedingly lost ground, and shrunk away. But the fact was very much the contrary.

§ 16. Christ often speaks of his last coming, as that which would be long delayed; Mat. xxv. 5. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Luke xx. 9. "A certain man planted a vineyard;" ver. 19. "After a long time, the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." Matt. xxiv. 48. "My Lord delayeth his coming." So Luke xvii. 22.

§ It is evident, that when Christ speaks of his coming; of his being revealed; of his coming in his kingdom, or his kingdom coming; he has respect to his appearing in those great works of his power, justice and grace, which should be in the destruction of Jerusalem, and other extraordinary providences which should attend it. So, in Luke xviii. 2. to the end, with chap. xviii. 1.—8. Christ speaks of *the kingdom of God coming*; of *the coming of the days of the Son of man*; of *the Son of man being revealed*; and of *the Son of man coming*. But yet, it is evident he has respect to the destruction of Jerusalem, by chap. xvii. 37.; "And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? and he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." See also chap. xix. 13—15. So, when the disciples had been observing the magnificence of the temple, and Christ had said to them, "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,"—having respect to the destruction of Jerusalem—the disciples asked him when these things should be? and what should be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world? By Christ's *coming*, they have plainly a

respect to that time of the destruction of the temple, which Christ had spoken of; and therefore, their question is thus expressed by St. Mark, chap. xiii. 5. 4. "Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" And in like manner by St. Luke, chap. xxi. 7.; and Christ has many things in his answer agreeable to this sense of this question. He warns them to beware of others that should come in his stead, Matt. xxiv. 4, 5. Then he proceeds to tell them what will precede the *end*, *i. e.* the end of the world, which the disciples inquired after, and tells them what shall be signs of its approach; Matt. xxiv. 6.—16. And then speaks of the desolation of Jerusalem, and of the land, as that *end* and that *coming* of his which *they* inquired after; Matt. xxiv. 15.—21. 28; and more plainly, Luke xxi. 20.—24.

From these things, it follows,

§ 18. That when Christ speaks of his coming, his coming in his kingdom, &c. as being in *that generation*, and before some who were then alive should taste of death, there is no need of understanding him of his coming to the *last judgment*; but it may well be understood of his coming at the *destruction of Jerusalem*, which, as has been shewn, he calls by these names, and which he also distinguishes from his coming to the last judgment, and the consummation of all things. Yea,

§ 19. It is evident, that he did not suppose his coming to the last judgment, and the consummation of all things, would be till a long time after the destruction of Jerusalem. The calling of the Gentiles, instead of the Jews, is spoken of as what should be principally after the destruction of Jerusalem; Mat. xxi. 41, 43. Luke xx. 15, 16; Mat. xxii. 7—10. But this, Christ himself speaks of as a gradual work in the parables of the grain and mustard seed, and of the leaven hid in three measures of meal; Mat. xiii. 31—33; Luke xiii. 19—21; Mark iv. 26—32. And it is very manifest, that Christ did not suppose the consummation of all things to take place, till long after the destruction of Jerusalem, Luke xxi. 24; where it is said of the Jews, that they should be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled.

CHAP. III.

Jesus's prophecies, a proof that he was the Christ, and a divine person.

§ 1. As Christ wrought miracles in a very different manner from the prophets, acting therein in his own name, and as doing what he did of his own power and will; so, also, he uttered prophecies in a way very diverse from that of the ancient prophets. The ancient prophets, when they uttered their predictions, were wont to introduce them after this manner, *Hear ye the word of the Lord: or, Thus saith the Lord*; shewing, that they did not speak of their own knowledge, but by special revelation and direction from God. Christ foretold things to come in a remarkably different manner and style, introducing his predictions, not with a *Thus saith the Lord*, but, *Verily, verily, I say unto you*; as, Matt. xxiii. 36.; xxiv. 34, 35; xxvi. 13; and 21; Mark xiv. 30; Luke xxi. 31, 32.; John xiii. 38.; xiv. 12. xvi. 20, 21, 22. The following place is very remarkable, shewing what great authority Christ attributed to his own word in his predictions, Matth. xxiv. 34, 35. "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my words* shall not pass away." These words are annexed to the chief prophecies that Christ ever uttered, which are contained in the xxivth chapter of Matthew. See the same, Luke xxi. 31, 32.

§ 2. Christ foretold future events, and those to be accomplished after his death, not only as what he knew by his own knowledge, but what he himself would bring to pass, both future blessings to his church and people, and future calamity and destruction to those persons and people that were his enemies.—

§ 3. *First*, He foretold great events for the *benefit* of his church, that he would bring to pass; John xiv. 12, 13, 14. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, he shall do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name,

I will do it." John xvi. 7—11. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you, that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, *I will send him unto you.* And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." And, ver. 20, 21, 22. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament; but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful. But your sorrow shall be turned into joy,—And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you." See the whole xiii. xiv. xv. and xvi. chapters of John: and Luke xxi. 15—18. "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents and brethren, and kinsfolks and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death: and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish." Luke xxiv. 49. "And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." So he foretold his own resurrection from the dead, as what he himself would bring to pass by his own power; John ii. 19. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up:" John x. 17, 18. "I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Mark xvi. 17, 18. "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

§ 4. *Secondly*, He foretold many great events, implying awful calamity and destruction to his enemies, as what he himself would bring to pass. Thus he speaks of that mighty destruction of the Jewish nation by the Romans, as that from which he would have protected them, if they had believed on him; Matt. xxiii. 36, 37, 38. "Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come on this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under

her wings, and ye would not ! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." This destruction is spoken of as what he would bring upon them, as a punishment for their rejection and contempt of him. Luke xix. 12, 13, 14. "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." With verse 27. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay before me."

§ 5. Christ not only foretold things future, as having ability in himself to accomplish them, but he promised to *give others ability* to foretel future events by his Spirit, and hereby should honour him, as having, in his foreknowledge of future things, the same honour with the Father. John xvi. 7. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come. But if I depart, I will send him unto you." Verse 13, 14, 15. "When the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak ; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine. Therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

! § 6. It is observable, that never any prophet gave such great and manifold opportunity for proof and trial, whether he was a true prophet or not, in the multitude of predictions of events to be fulfilled in his life-time, and during that generation after his death : and also in the plainness of his predictions ; most of them being delivered, not in visionary, mystical representations, but in a manner intelligible to all.

§ 7. Therefore, the supposition that, if Christ were an impostor, God would so order it, that all these predictions—many of them so strange and wonderful, and in themselves so exceedingly unlikely—should exactly come to pass ; and that God's providence should so wonderfully confirm his words, beyond those of any other prophet that ever had been in the world, is extremely unreasonable ; especially considering the following things :

§ 8. *1st*, That God had of old given this as a sign, by which his people might know a true prophet; viz. the coming to pass of the things foretold by him. And this rule is annexed by Moses to that great promise, which God gave of the Messiah, Deut. xviii. 15, &c. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him ye shall hearken. According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God; neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods; even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass; that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken; but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously. Thou shalt not be afraid of him."—Now, therefore, since Jesus professed to be the Messiah, and the great Prophet foretold and promised by God in this place, and uttered so many great and wonderful prophecies; it might be expected, if he was a mere pretender, and spake presumptuously, and uttered what the Lord had not spoken, that God should not have confirmed his prophecies, in his providence; but, in that case, would have given his people opportunity to refute, by this rule, his pretences.

§ 9. *2d*, That foretelling future events, is spoken of by God, as one great thing wherein the Messiah should differ from the false gods and false prophets, and vain pretenders of the Heathens. In that great prophecy of the kingdom of the Messiah, beginning with the fortieth chapter of Isaiah to the end of the book, the foretelling of future events, in such a manner as to shew, that the person who foretells, does foresee, and has a view of futurity, is often mentioned as a divine prerogative, and therefore as a good evidence, that he that does so is a divine person, or speaks by divine authority. There-

fore the prophets and gods of the Heathens, are often challenged on this head, and the proof of their authority often put upon this issue: Isaiah xli. 21—28.; xlii. 8, 9.; xliii. 9—12.; xliv. 6—8.; xlv. 3. and 21.; xlvi. 10.; xlviii. 14.—In this prophecy it is declared, that herein the Messiah should differ from all vain pretenders; (see chap. xli. 27.; and xlii. at the beginning; compared with chap. xli. 21—29. Now therefore, is it credible, that God would so order it, that one who falsely pretended to be the Messiah, should, in so high a degree, have this honour, which God had mentioned as the great and distinguishing honour which he would put on the true Messiah, as his Elect, in whom his soul delighted?

§ 10. 3d, That the foretelling of future events, as by his own knowledge, and as events that are to be accomplished by his own power, is spoken of by God, as his great prerogative, and as a good and sure evidence of the divinity of the person who can do thus; and God speaks thus, in those very places in which he is foretelling the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah xli. 21—3. “Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen.—Shew the things that are to come hereafter, *that we may know that ye are Gods.*” Ver. 26. “Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know, and before time, that we may say, he is righteous? Yea there is none that sheweth; yea there is none that declareth; yea there is none that heareth your words.” Then, in the next words, God promises the Messiah. Verse 27. “The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold them; and I will give to Jerusalem, one that bringeth good tidings;” i. e. that foreshews glorious future things which God is about to do for his people.

§ 11. Therefore, since God mentions the foretelling of future events in this manner, as a certain note of divinity, and a distinguishing honour that he would put on the Messiah, his elect in whom his soul delighteth, Is it *credible*, that God would put this honour, in so great a degree, on one who falsely pretended to be the Messiah, and the beloved of God? And especially, when he pretended, in this respect, to have the same honour which belongs to God; as John xvi. 13—15. “He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath, are mine: Therefore said I, that he shall

take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." He also speaks of his knowledge of divine secrets, and future events, as the effect of the peculiar love that God had to him; John v. 20. "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth."

§ 12. Great changes in kingdoms and nations, coming to pass according to God's predictions, is often spoken of by God himself as a great evidence of his being the only true God. The foretelling of the destruction of Babylon by Cyrus, is greatly insisted on by God, as a great evidence of his being the true God, and as most clearly and greatly distinguishing him from all pretenders to divinity. See chap. xli. 21—27.; see also chap. xliv. 25. to the end, and xlvi. 10. But Jesus was one that professed divinity, and foretold revolutions of nations as great and strange as this, yea, far more wonderful. He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, which had been the holy city, and of the nation of Jews, who had been God's own people, and whose protector he had in a special manner been, and towards whom he exercised a most peculiar providence. He also foretold the deliverance of the Christians who were in Jerusalem. It was a greater thing, and less to be expected, that such a city and such a nation should be destroyed, than that destruction should befall a nation of aliens. Therefore, to foretell this destruction, with the various circumstances of it, as they actually took place, is a greater evidence of divine foreknowledge, than to foretell the destruction of a nation of aliens.

§ 13. The turning of the wilderness into a fruitful field, is spoken of by God as a peculiar work of God, and a certain sign of a divine hand; Isa. xli. 18, 19, 20. "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the Shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree. I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine and the box-tree together, that they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this." It is evident, this is not intended in a literal sense, but signifies the happy change in the state of mankind, from a state wherein men are represented as barren, as briers and thorns, and as wild beasts, to a morally excellent and happy state. This might be proved, by the frequent use of such figures in the prophecies of scrip-

ture. But it is manifest, that this, according to Christ's prediction, was effected, in a remarkable manner, by Christ himself, and his apostles and followers, in the turning of the world from heathenism, to the knowledge and worship of the true God, to just apprehensions of his moral government, and from all manner of vice to virtue.

§ 14. It is remarkable that it is foretold, Isa. xlii. that the Messiah should set judgment in the earth, and his law or religion among the nations, particularly *the isles*, or Europe, against strong opposition and through great sufferings, under which his church should seem ready to be extinguished or crushed, like smoking flax, or a bruised reed : but that, finally, judgment should be brought forth to victory.

CHAP. IV.

The propriety of a general judgment, and a future state.

§ 1. The doctrine taught in the scriptures, that at the end of the world all mankind shall stand together before the judgment-seat of the supreme Lawgiver and Judge, to have all things visibly set to rights—and justice made visibly to take place with respect to all the persons, actions and affairs of the moral world, by the infinitely wise, holy, and just Head of it—is a most *reasonable* doctrine, and much commends itself to our belief, from the reason of the thing, on the supposition of a moral government maintained over the world by him who created it. For this implies, that he governs the world as its lawgiver and judge, and will treat men as accountable creatures. God's moral government not only requires, that there should be divine laws, and an execution of them in rewards and punishments ; but also, that both should be made *visible*. It is requisite, that the subject should have proper means of knowing what the laws are, by which he is obligated, and the grounds of the obligation ; and that others who are his fellow subjects should also know his obligations. For, as men are made to dwell in society, this cannot well be, without knowing each other's obligations, and being able to judge of the good or evil of each other's actions. It is likewise requisite, that the subject of the laws, should have proper means of knowing the grounds of the rewards or punishments of which he is the subject, in the execution of the laws ; and that it should be made

manifest, to the conscience of him who is rewarded or punished, what he is rewarded or punished for, and the ground on which the Judge assigns such a retribution ; and, if he see others punished or acquitted, that the ground of it should be manifested to him, that he may see the justice of it. That there should be some judicial proceeding in which that should take place, seems absolutely necessary, in order to a proper manifestation of the grounds of the subject's reward or punishment, and a display of the justice of his judge to his own conscience ; which must be, if the subject be dealt with as a rational moral agent.

§ 2. Hence it is of necessity, that every one of mankind must be the subject of such a dispensation of God towards him, which may fitly be called an appearing before the judgment-seat of God. And it is most reasonable to suppose, that this judicial proceeding will not be secret ; that each individual will not be judged so, that the transaction with respect to him will be out of the sight and knowledge of all others ; but that truth and righteousness will be made visibly to take place, after a prevalence of wrong, wickedness and confusion, in the violations of a divine law, which was public, and the law of their union and regulation in society ; many of those violations are of course visible to others, and others are concerned in them, either in being united in the wickedness, and accessory to it, or a party concerned in suffering the injury done by that wickedness.

§ 3. Reasonable creatures are the eye of the world ; they are capable of beholding the beauty and excellency of the Creator's workmanship, and those displays of himself, which he has made in his works : and therefore it is requisite, that the beauty and excellency of the world, as God hath constituted it, should not be hid or kept secret. But the beauty of God's constitution of the world, consists mainly, without doubt, in the intelligent part of the world, which is the head and end of all the rest, *et instar omnium*. But the beauty and order of God's constitution of this, consists chiefly in his moral regulation of it. Now, therefore, since God has made the beauty and regularity of the natural world so publicly visible to all ; it is much more requisite, that the moral beauty and regularity of his disposals in the intelligent world, should be publicly visible. For the beauty of

God's works consists a thousand times more in this, than in the other. It is reasonable to suppose, that these will be as publicly visible as the brightness and beautiful order and motions of the heavenly bodies, and the regular successions of the various seasons of the year, and the beauties of nature in the air and on the face of the earth. The moral deformity and confusion of the world, is most public; it stands forth continually in view through all ages. It is therefore fit, that the rectifying of this deformity and disorder, and the bringing of light out of darkness, should also be made publicly visible to those creatures, that are made to be the eye of the creation, to behold its beauty, and the glory of the Creator in it. God has given man a nature, which, if it be under the influence of true virtue, desires above all things to behold this kind of order and beauty. When man sees a great and horrid crime committed, as some nefarious act of injustice, cruelty, &c. the nature of the reasonable creature has something in it, which desires and makes it requisite, that he should see justice done, and right take place, with respect to such an act. The mind or heart, as it were, fails in such a case, if it neither sees this, nor hopes to see it.

§ 4. If it be requisite that judgment should be public, and that many should stand together before the judgment-seat; on the same account, it will appear most reasonable to suppose, that the whole world should appear together in one great assembly, before the judgment-seat. The whole world is one commonwealth and kingdom, all made of one blood, all under one moral head, one law, and one government; and all parts of it are joined in communication one with another. All are sinners, and yet God appears placable to all, &c. All dwell in one habitation, viz. this earth, under the same roof of the visible heavens, having the same sun to enlighten them, &c. Besides, many of the causes and controversies to be decided by the Supreme Judge of the world, are of the most public nature; as causes between princes and heads of great kingdoms and monarchies, and their people; and causes between one nation and another. Yea, there are many causes which the Supreme Judge must bring to an issue, wherein the greater part of the world is concerned. And when the cause and controversy between these two is judged, it is requisite that both parties should appear together before the judgment-seat. The Roman emperors had to do with other nations that were without the limits of the empire, to the utmost ends of the

earth; as with the Scythians, the Persians, the Arabians, the Indians, the Chinese, the Germans, Cimbrians and Africans. So that it is requisite, when they appear to be judged, that not only the people of the Roman empire should appear with them, but also those other nations. Thus, all the nations of Europe have dealings one with another continually; and these European nations have some dealings with almost all other nations upon earth, in Asia, Africa, and America.

§ 5. It is therefore necessary, that all nations should be gathered together before the judgment-seat of the Supreme Lawgiver and Judge, that he may determine between them, and settle all things by his wise, righteous, and infallible decision. And many of the good and evil acts that are done, though the world is not properly concerned in them as a party interested, yet are public through the world. They are done in the sight of the world, and greatly draw the attention of mankind. It is fit, therefore, that they should be as publicly judged. And, it is to be observed, that the longer the world stands, the more and more communication have the different parts of it together. So that, at the end of the world, there probably will be the highest reason, in this respect, that all nations that shall then be found upon the earth, should be called together before the judgment-seat of God.

§ 6. As it is requisite, that all who dwell on the face of the earth at the same time, should appear together before the judgment-seat; so it is also requisite, that all generations that have succeeded one another, appear together. Many of the moral acts, both good and bad, not only are public in this respect, that they are known over great part of the face of the earth, in or near the time of them; but also they are made public to all following generations, by tradition and history. And if the actions of one generation be not visible to all, yet the actions of one generation are very visible to the generation immediately following, and theirs to the next; and so, all, in this sense, are very visible one to another. And as all nations of the world are morally concerned one with another, though not so as each one immediately concerned with every other nation; yet all are mutually concerned by concatenation.—One nation is concerned with the next, and that with the next, and so on: So that there is need that all should appear together to be judged.

§ 7. All generations of men, from the beginning to the end of the world, are morally concerned one with another.—The first generation is concerned with the next, and that with the next, and so on to the end of the world. Therefore, it is requisite, that all should appear together to be judged. Parents may injure their children, and children may injure their parents; and so they are two parties in one cause, which must be decided by the Supreme Judge. Therefore, it is needful, that they, as parties, should appear together, when their cause is judged. Parents and children, or a younger generation and an older, may be accessory to each other's crimes, or united in each other's virtuous deeds; and therefore, it is requisite that they should be judged together. Yea, the present generation may become accessory to an injury committed by their ancestors ages ago. For, in many things, they stand in the stead of those ancestors, and act for them, and have power to continue the injury, or to remove it.

§ 8. Posterity is concerned in the actions of their ancestors or predecessors, in families, nations, and most communities of men, as standing in some respect in their stead. And some particular persons may injure, not only a great part of the world contemporary with them, but may injure and undo all future generations of many individuals, families, or larger communities. So that men who live now, may have an action against those who lived a thousand years ago: or there may be a cause which needs to be decided by the Judge of the world, between some of the present generation, and some who lived a thousand years ago. Princes who, by rapine and cruelty, ruin nations, are answerable for the poverty, slavery, and misery of the posterity of those nations. So, as to those who broach and establish opinions and principles, which tend to the overthrow of virtue, and propagation of vice, and are contrary to the common rights and privileges of mankind.—Thus, Mahomet has injured all succeeding posterity, and is answerable, at least in a degree, for the ruin of the virtue of his followers in many respects, and for the rapine, violence, and terrible devastations which his followers have been guilty of toward the nations of the world, and to which they have been instigated by the principles which he taught them. And, whoever they were, who first drew away men from the true religion, and introduced and established idolatry, they have injured all nations that have to this day partaken of the infection.

§ 9. In like manner, persons, by their virtue, may be great benefactors to mankind, through all succeeding generations. Without doubt, the apostle Paul, and others who assisted him, and following generations, may properly become the subjects of a judicial proceeding, with respect to that great religious change and revolution in the nations subject to the Roman empire, in abolishing heathenish idolatry, and setting up Christianity in the room of it.

§ 10. The end of the divine judgment is the manifestation of the divine justice: and how fit is it, that the justice of the universal and supreme Head and Judge of all mankind, in governing his kingdom, should be most publicly manifested, and exhibited to his whole kingdom! This doctrine of the day of judgment, exceedingly becomes the universal moral Head of the world, who rules through all generations.

§ 11. If there shall ever come a time, wherein the Law-giver and Judge of the world will publicly regulate the moral state of all generations, the end of the world, when there shall be a final period to all farther probation, seems to be a proper time for it. If ever, by divine wisdom and righteousness, there be brought about a righteous, holy, and glorious issue of the confused state of the world, it will be, when this world shall have come to an end. As the proper time for judging a particular person, is, when the probationary state of that person is at an end; so the proper time for the public judgment of the world, is, when the probationary world comes to an end.

§ 12. There is all reason to think, that the wicked will hereafter be punished together, having a place of punishment assigned for them, where they shall suffer divine vengeance in sight of one another: and that the righteous will also be rewarded together. If so, it is most requisite that their judgment should be together; that they may understand the ground and reason of that punishment, and of that reward, which they shall see in each other.

§ 13. It is most agreeable to reason, that there is a future state of rewards and punishments, wherein God will reward and make happy good men, and make wicked men miserable. And if there be a future state of happiness to God's favourites, it is rational to suppose, that this should be ETERNAL: be-

cause, otherwise, God's greatest favourites, to whom he gives the greatest rewards in another world, would, in one respect, have most to torment them; to wit, the dreadful and eternal end of that sweet happiness. The sweeter and more happy life is, the more terrible are death and the thoughts and expectations of it. It is not likely that God would add such a sting to the sweetest enjoyments and rewards of his greatest favourites. It is rational, therefore, to suppose, that the life he gives them after death, is life eternal; life that is not to come to an end by another worse death, consisting not only in the destruction of the body, but the abolition of the soul. God has not made men like the brutes, who cannot contemplate futurity, and therefore, have no allay to present enjoyment by the prospect of an end by death. And if it be so, that there be an eternal state of happiness in another world, set before us to be sought after: then, how rational are the Christian doctrines and precepts, of placing our affections on heavenly objects; of weanedness from the world; of behaving as pilgrims and strangers on the earth; of not laying up treasure on the earth, but in heaven; of selling all for the kingdom of heaven; of not looking at the things which are seen, which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal? Hence, also, the reasonableness of the Christian precepts of patience under sufferings, seeing these afflictions are but for a moment, in comparison with the duration of the future weight of glory.

§ 14. The doctrine of the gospel concerning an **INVISIBLE WORLD**, to which good men are to be transferred, and where they are to have their inheritance and fixed abode, is most rational on this account, that this visible world is corruptible in its own nature. Such is the nature and constitution of it, that it must come to an end. And it is unreasonable to suppose, that the Creator would leave it gradually to perish, languishing in a decayed, broken, miserable state, through thousands of ages, gradually growing more and more wretched, before it is quite destroyed. Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose, that there will be a time wherein its Creator will immediately interpose, to put the world to an end, and destroy it suddenly. And at that time, all the living inhabitants of the world, that are not taken from it and translated to some other abode, must perish, and be destroyed in a very awful manner, by the immediate hand of God, with most inexpressible manifestations of his mighty power and great majesty.

And who can believe, that at that time, when God in this manner immediately interposes, he will make no distinction between the virtuous, and his enemies? That this awful destruction and wrath shall come upon all alike? There will be no necessity of it from the course of nature. For at that time, by the supposition, God will put an end to the course of nature. God will immediately and miraculously interpose. The whole affair shall be miraculous, and by God's immediate hand; and therefore, a miraculous deliverance of the good, will not be at all beside God's manner of operation at this time. He can as easily, and, without departing any more from the stated course of things, miraculously deliver the virtuous, as he can miraculously destroy the wicked.

§ 15. Therefore, we may well suppose, that at that time, when God is about to put an end to the frame of this visible universe, the virtuous will be translated into some other world, beyond the limits of the visible one. And if God designs thus to deal with all the good that shall be found alive on the earth at that time, how rational is it to suppose, that he deals in like manner with the good in all generations? That they all are translated into that distant invisible world? Without doubt, the world into which God will receive his favourites, when this corruptible world shall perish, shall be incorruptible. He will not translate them from one corruptible world to another. He will not save them from one world that is to perish, to carry them to another world that is to perish. Therefore, they shall be immortal, and have eternal life; and, doubtless, that world will be unspeakably better than this, and free from all that destruction, that fleeting, fading, perishing, empty nature, that attends all the things of this world; and their bodies shall be immortal, and as secure from perishing, as the world is, to which they are translated.

§ 16. This makes it most reasonable to suppose, that good men, in all ages, are translated to that world. For why should so vast a difference be made, between the virtuous that shall be of the last generation, and the virtuous of all preceding generations? Seeing there is a far distant and invisible world provided for some of the virtuous inhabitants of this world, it is reasonable to suppose, that all the good shall have their habitation and inheritance together there, as one society, partaking of the same reward; as they were of the same race of mankind, and loved and served God, and followed him in the

same state here below, in the performance of the same duties, the same work, and under like trials and difficulties.

§ 17. It is also, hence, rational to suppose, that there should be a RESURRECTION of the bodies of the saints of all past generations. For, from what has been observed before, the bodies of the saints of the last generation, will be preserved from perishing with the world, and will be translated. And, doubtless, if all the good of all generations, are to have a like reward, and are to dwell together in the same world in one society; they shall be in a like state, partaking of a like reward.

§ 18. The reasonableness of the doctrine of the resurrection will appear, if we suppose, that union with a body is the most rational state of perfection of the human soul: which may be argued from the consideration, that this was the condition in which the human soul was created at first; and that its separation from the body is no improvement of its condition, being an alteration brought on by sin, and was inflicted under the notion of evil, and expressly as punishment, upon the forfeiture of a privilege. From whence we must conclude, that the former state of union to the body, was a better state than the disunion which was threatened. Sin introduced that death that consists in the separation of body and soul. The state of innocency was embodied: the state of guilt was disembodied.* Therefore, as Christ came to restore from all the calamities which came from sin, it is most reasonable to suppose, that he will restore the union of soul and body.

CHAP. V.

The miracles of Jesus not counterfeited by his enemies, and superior to those under the Old Testament.

§ 1. It adds to the evidence which is given to the truth of Christianity, by the multitude of miracles wrought by Christ, his apostles and followers in the first century, that there were no pretences of inspiration, or miracles, among the Jews (at least none worth notice) in Judea, or any other part of the world. If all that multitude, and that long con-

* Winder's History of Knowledge, p. 59, 60.

tinued series of miracles, recorded to be wrought in confirmation of Christianity, were fictions, vain pretences, or enthusiastic imaginations; why were there no pretences or imaginations of the same sort, on the other side, among the Jews, in opposition to these? Those of the Jews that were opposed to Christianity, were vastly the greater part of the nation.— And they had as high an opinion of the honourableness of those gifts of prophecy and miracles, as Christians. They had as much in their notions and tempers, to lead them to a fondness for the claim of such an honour to their party. They were exceedingly proud of their special relation to God, and of their high privilege as the peculiar favourites of heaven; and, in this respect, were exalted far above all the world: which is a temper of mind (as we see abundantly) above all others, leading men to pretences of this nature.

§ 2. There could be nothing peculiar in the constitution of the first Christians, tending to enthusiasm, beyond the rest of the Jews: For they were of the same blood, the same race and nation. Nor could it be because they wanted zeal against Christianity, and a desire to oppose and destroy it; or wanted envy and virulent opposition of mind to any pretences in the Christians to excel them in the favour of God, or excellency of any gifts or privileges whatsoever. They had such zeal and such envy, even to madness and fury.

§ 3. The true reason, therefore, why so vast a multitude of miracles were said, and believed, to be openly wrought among Christians, for so long a time, even for a whole age, and none among the Jews, must be, that such was the state of things in that age, that it was not possible to palm false pretences of such a kind upon the world; and that those who were most elated with pride, and most ambitious of such an honour, could see no hope of succeeding in any such pretences; and because the Christians indeed were inspired, and were enabled to work miracles, and did work them, as was pretended and believed, in great multitudes, and this continually for so long a time. But God never favoured their adversaries with such a privilege.

§ 4. When Moses objected (Exod. iv.) that perhaps the people would not believe his mission, God directed him to work two miracles to convince them: first, the transmutation

of his rod to and from a serpent; and, secondly, the making his hand leprous, and healing the leprosy. And it is to be noted, that the preference is given to the last miracle, as being especially what might well be regarded as a good evidence of Moses's divine mission; ver. 8. "And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign." By which it is manifest, that such a sort of miracles as Christ wrought, and which he most abounded in, viz. his healing the bodies of men when diseased, were a proper and good evidence of a divine mission.*

§ 5. Moses tells Pharaoh, Exodus viii. 10. "The frogs shall be removed, that thou mayest know that there is none like the Lord our God." The magicians could bring up frogs, but not remove them. They brought plagues, but took away none. But if the driving out the frogs was such an evidence of the distinguishing power of the Almighty; how much more the driving out devils from the bodies and souls of men, silencing their oracles, turning them out of their temples, and out of those who used curious arts, as at Ephesus, and afterwards abolishing their worship through the Roman empire? For the gods that were worshipped in the heathen world, were devils, Psal. cvi. 37. Deuter. xxxii. 17. Lev. xvii. 7. Christ by the prevailing of the Christian religion, cast out those devils out of the very land of Egypt. And which was the greatest work? to drive the frogs out of Egypt, or to drive out the impure spirits that were the gods of Egypt? It is spoken of, Isa. xix. 1. as a glorious manifestation of the majesty of God, that he should ride on a swift cloud, and should come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt should be moved at his presence. See also Jeremiah xliiii. 12. But when Christ came into Egypt, in the preaching of his gospel, he moved, dispossessed and banished the idols of Egypt, and abolished them out of the world. And not only did Christ thus drive away the devils, the false gods, out of Egypt, but out of all the nations round about Canaan, that were known by the Israelites, even to the utmost extent of the then known heathen world. These gods were by Christ dispossessed of their ancient tenements, which they had holden age after age, time out of mind. They were utterly abolished; so that they have had no worshippers now for a great many ages, no temples, no sacrifices, no ho-

* See Kidder's Demonstration, part ii. p. 5.

honours done them. They are old, obsolete things now, utterly disregarded in the world. It is abundantly spoken of in the Old Testament as a future glorious work of God, greatly manifesting his power and majesty, and that he should prevail against, and destroy the gods of the heathens, and abolish their worship. But our Jesus has the honour of this glorious work.

§ 6. Again, when Korah and his company charged Moses and Aaron with taking too much upon them, Moses says, Numbers xvi. 5, "To-morrow, the Lord will shew who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him; even him whom he hath chosen, will he cause to come near unto him." And again, ver. 28, 29, 30. "Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of my own mind: if these men die the common death of all men," &c. If the miraculous taking away of men's lives, be so great an evidence of Moses and Aaron's divine mission, and of their being holy, and chosen and appointed of God, how much more is raising men from the dead an evidence of the same work? Which is the greatest work? to take away mens lives, or to restore them to life after they are dead; or, indeed, miraculously to save them from death, when they are sick with mortal diseases? Again; God's causing the earth to open and swallow up those wicked men, is no more an evidence of a divine hand, than Christ's preventing the sea from swallowing up those that were in the ship, by immediately quieting the winds and sea by a word speaking, when the ship was even covered with waves, through the violence of the tempest: At another time, upholding Peter from sinking and being swallowed up by the tempestuous sea, when walking on the water. Elisha's causing iron to swim, is mentioned, in the Old Testament, as a great miracle. But this was not greater than Christ's walking on the water, and causing Peter to walk upon it.—When Elijah had restored to life the widow's son, she says, 1 Kings xvii. 24. "By this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy month, is truth." But this sort of miracles Christ wrought, besides rising from the dead himself.

§ 7. Moses speaks of God's stilling the tempest in Egypt, and causing the thunder and hail to cease, as that which will convince Pharaoh, that the earth was the Lord's, Exodus ix. 29. Then, by parity of reason, Christ's stilling the tempest and

causing the winds and seas to obey him, is an evidence, that the seas and earth were his. Moses, to convince the people of his divine mission, took some of the water of the river, and poured it out on the dry land, and it was turned to blood; Exod. vii. 17,—20. But this was not a greater work, nor so glorious, as Christ's turning water into wine.

§ 8. Abraham's conquering the four kings and their armies, with his armed servants and confederates greatly affected Melchisadek, king of Salem, and convinced him, that Abraham was God's chosen friend; chosen, that he and his posterity might be blessed as God's people. But what is this to Jesus's conquering the world in its greatest strength; and, when united under that, which by the prophet Daniel is represented, as the greatest, and by far the strongest monarchy, by his handful of poor, weak, illiterate disciples?

§ 9. Christ's victory over the false gods of the nations, in this conquest, was far more conspicuous, as the opposition was to them; the strife was more directly with them; the thing professedly sought and aimed at by Christ in the conflict, was the utter destruction of these false gods, the entire rooting of them out, and the abolition of their worship out of the world: and such a victory was obtained; those false gods were forsaken, their oracles silenced, their temples destroyed, their images every where burnt, and their remembrance made to cease; so that now, for many ages, they have not been remembered, any otherwise, than as instances of the great blindness and folly of their votaries.

§ 10. How often are the miracles wrought in Egypt, spoken of as clear evidences, that he that wrought them, was the Supreme God, and the only True God; Exodus vii. 3, 4, 5; chapter viii. 10, 19, 22.

§ 11. The work of Gideon in conquering the Midianites and the multitudes that were joined with them, by three hundred men, with the light of lamps and sound of trumpets, is celebrated as a great work of God's power, Judges vi. 14. and vii. 2. 7. But this is but a mere type of Christ's conquering the world by the preaching of the gospel. This victory over Midian, is spoken of in the scripture, as representing the conquests of the Messiah, Isaiah, ix. 4.

CHAP VI.

Observations on the scriptures;—their authority—and necessity.

§ 1. Some may ask, why the scripture expresses things so unintelligibly? It tells us of Christ's living in us, of our being united to him, of being the same spirit, and uses many other such like expressions. Why doth it not call directly by their intelligible names, those things that lie hid under these expressions? I answer, Then we should have an hundred pages to express what is implied in these words, "ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost;" neither would it after all be understood by the one fourth part of mankind. Whereas, as it is expressed, it serves as well to practice, if we will believe what God says, that, some way or other, we are inhabited by the Holy Ghost as a temple, and therefore we ought to keep ourselves holy and pure. And we are united to Christ as much as members are to the head; and therefore ought to rejoice, seeing we know that this union proceeds from his love to us; and that the effects of it, are joy, happiness, spiritual and eternal life, &c. By such similitudes, a vast volume is represented to our minds in three words; and things that we are not able to behold directly, are presented before us in lively pictures.

§ 2. There is a strange and unaccountable kind of enchantment, if I may so speak, in scripture history, which although it is destitute of all rhetorical ornaments, makes it vastly more pleasant, agreeable, easy and natural than any other history whatever. It shines bright with the amiable simplicity of truth. There is something in the relation, that, at the same time, very much pleases and engages the reader, and evidences the truth of the fact. It is impossible to tell fully what I mean, to any that have not taken notice of it before. One reason doubtless is this: The scripture sets forth things just as they happened, with the minute circumstances of time, place, situation, gesture, habit, &c. in such a natural method, that we seem to be actually present; and we insensibly fancy, not that we are readers, but spectators, yea actors in the business. These little circumstances wonderfully help to brighten the ideas of the more principal parts of the history. And, although the scriptures goes be-

yond other histories, in mentioning such circumstances; yet no circumstances are mentioned, but those that wonderfully brighten the whole. So the story is told very fully, and without in the least crowding things together, before one has fully taken up what was last related; and yet told in much less room, than any one else could tell it. Notwithstanding the minute circumstances mentioned, which other historians leave out, it leads along our ideas so naturally and easily, that they seem to go neither too fast nor too slow. One seems to know as exactly how it is from the relation, as if he saw it. The mind is so led on, that sometimes we seem to have a full, large and particular history of a long time: so that if we should shut the book immediately, without taking particular notice, we should not suppose the story had been told in half so little room; and yet a long train of ideas is communicated. The story is so narrated, that our mind, although some facts are not mentioned, yet naturally traces the whole transaction. And although it be thus skilfully contrived, yet things are told in such a simple, plain manner, that the least child can understand them. This is a perfection in the sacred writers, which no other authors can equal.

§ 3. It is an argument with me, that the world is not yet very near its end, that the church has made no greater progress in understanding the mysteries of the scriptures. The scriptures, in all their parts, were made for the use of the church here on earth; and it seems reasonable to suppose, that God will, by degrees, unvail their meaning to his church. It was made mysterious, in many places having great difficulties, that his people might have exercise for their pious wisdom and study, and that his church might make progress in the understanding of it as the philosophical world makes progress in the understanding of the book of nature, and in unfolding its mysteries. A divine wisdom appears in ordering it thus. How much better is it to have divine truth and light break forth in this way, than it would have been, to have had it shine at once to every one, without any labour or industry of the understanding? It would be less delightful, and less prized and admired, and would have had vastly less influence on mens hearts, and would have been less to the glory of God.

§ 4 It seems to be evident, that the church is not as yet arrived to that perfection in understanding the scripture,

which we can imagine is the highest that God ever intended the church should come to. There are a multitude of things in the Old Testament, which the church then did not understand, but were reserved to be unfolded in the Christian church, such as most of their types, and shadow and prophecies, which make up the greatest part of the Old Testament. So I believe there are now many truths that remain to be discovered by the church, in the glorious times that are approaching.

§ 5. Another thing from which we may draw the same conclusion, is, that it is the manner of God, to keep his church on earth in hope of a still more glorious state: and so their prayers are enlivened, when they pray that the interest of religion may be promoted, and God's kingdom may come. God kept the church, under the Old Testament, in hope of the times of the Messiah. The disciples of Christ were kept in hope of the conversion of the Roman empire, which was effected about three hundred years after. But it seems to me, not likely, that the church, from that time, should have no more to hope for from God's word, no higher advancement, till the consummation of all things. Indeed, there will be a great, but short apostacy, a little before the end of the world. But then, it is probable, the thing that the church will hope and long for, will be Christ's last coming, to advance his church to its highest and its everlasting glory; for that will then appear to be the only remedy: For the church will expect no more from the clear light and truth which will have been so gloriously displayed already, under the millennium. Another end of thus keeping his church in hope is, to quicken and enliven their endeavours to propagatè religion, and to advance the kingdom of Jesus. It is a great encouragement to such endeavours, to think, that such times are coming, wherein Christianity shall prevail over all enemies. And it would be a great discouragement to the labours of nations, or pious magistrates and divines, to endeavour to advance Christ's kingdom, if they understood that it was not to be advanced. And indeed, the keeping alive such hopes in the church, has a tendency to enliven all piety and religion in the general, amongst God's people.

§ 6. When we inquire, whether or no we have scripture grounds for any doctrine, the question is, Whether or no the scripture exhibits it any way to the eye of the mind, or to the eye of reason? We have no grounds to assert, that it was God's intent, by the scripture, *in so many terms*, to

declare every doctrine that he would have us believe. There are many things the scripture may suppose that we know already. And if what the scripture says, together with what is plain to reason, leads to believe any doctrine, we are to look upon ourselves as taught that doctrine by the scripture. God may reveal things in scripture, which way he pleases. If, by what he there reveals, the thing is any way clearly discovered to the understanding, or eye of the mind, it is our duty to receive it as his revelation.

§ 7. The greatest part of Christians were very early agreed, what books were canonical, and to be looked upon as the rule of their faith. It is impossible, in the nature of things, but some churches must receive the books long after others, as they lay at a greater distance from the places where they were written, or had less convenience of communication with them. Besides, as Christianity, for a long time, laboured under the disadvantages of continual persecution, no general councils could be convened, and so there could be no public notification of universal agreement in this matter. But notwithstanding all these things, it is yet discoverable, that, as soon as can be supposed, after the writing the books, the Christians, in all countries, remarkably agreed in receiving them as canonical.

§ 8. Several of the first writers of Christianity, have left us, in their works, *catalogues* of the sacred books of the New Testament, which, though made in countries at a vast distance from each other, do very little differ. Great were the pains and care of those early Christians, to be well assured what were the genuine writings of the apostles, and to distinguish them from all pretended revelations of designing men, and the forgeries they published under sacred titles. Thus, when a presbyter of Asia had published a spurious piece, under the name of Paul, he was immediately convicted, and notice of the forgery was soon conveyed to Carthage and the churches of Africa.

§ 9. Hence it follows, that the primitive Christians are proper judges to determine what book is canonical, and what not. For nothing can be more absurd than to suppose, in those early ages, an agreement so universal, without good and solid foundation: or, in other words, it is next to impossible, either that so great a number of men should agree in a cheat, or be imposed upon by a cheat. But there are some particular circumstances that make the inference more clear as to the

Christian books, than others ; such as, the prodigious esteem the books at first were received with ; the constant use that was made of them in their religious assemblies ; the translations made of them very early into other languages, &c.*

§ 10. The omission of a book in some one or two particular catalogues, cannot, with any reason, be urged against its canonical authority, if it be found in all, or most of the others, and any good reason can be assigned for the omission, where it occurs. Thus, for instance, the Revelation is omitted, either perhaps because it was not known to the author, or its credit was not sufficiently established in the country where he lived ; or perhaps, which may be as probable as the other, because it being so full of mysteries, few or none were judged proper or able to read it to any purpose. This was certainly the case in England : this book being, for this reason, omitted in the public calendar for reading the scriptures, though it be received into the canon. If, therefore, these, or any such good reasons, can be assigned for the omission of a book in a particular catalogue, it will be very unfair to infer that such book is apocryphal, especially when it is to be found in many or most other catalogues.

§ 11. The catalogue drawn up by ATHANASIUS, Bp. of Alexandria (A. D. 315.)—by EPIPHANIUS, Bp. of Salamis (A. D. 370.)—by JEROME, of Dalmatia, (A. D. 382.)—by RUFFIN, presbyter of Aquilegium, (A. D. 390.)—by Augustine, Bp. of Hippo, (A. D. 394.)—by 44 Bps. assembled in the 3d council of Carthage, (A. D. 416.) were perfectly the same with ours now received.†

§ 12. It is exceedingly natural to suppose, that these two things together, would soon lead the apostles to write some history of the acts, and doctrine, and sufferings of Christ, their great Lord, and the Head of the Christian church ; viz. *first*, Their unavoidable experience of the need of such a thing ; and, *secondly*, The example of the penmen of the Old Testament, in writing the history of Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, and others, whose persons and actions they esteemed of vastly less importance than those of the Son of God, who

* See Jones's canon of the New Testament, part i. chap. 5.

† See Jones's Canon of the New Testament, part i. chap. 8.

was greater than Jonas, or David, or Solomon, or Moses, or Abraham.

§ 13. It is a great argument, that there were some genuine gospels, or authentic histories of Christ's life and death, that the Christian church had under the name of gospels, that there were such a multitude of forged fabulous accounts, or histories, of Christ, all under the same name of gospels. These fictions are evidently counterfeits or imitations of something that was looked on by all as true and undoubted. And, that there should be such a multitude of counterfeits and imitations of these gospels, thews not only that there were genuine gospels, but also, shews the great value and importance of these genuine gospels, and the high repute they had in the Christian churches.—Mr. Jones mentions the following spurious gospels, now not extant, mentioned by the writers of the primitive church: By the writers of the second century, the gospel of Judas Iscariot; the gospel of Truth; the gospel of the Egyptians; the gospel of Valentinus; the gospel of Marcion. By writers of the third century, the gospel of the Twelve apostles; the gospel of Basilides; the gospel of Thomas; the gospel of Matthias. By writers of the fourth century, the gospel of Scythianus; the gospel of Bartholomew; the gospel of Apelles; the gospel of Lucianus; the gospel of Hesychius; the gospel of Perfection; the gospel of Eve; the gospel of Philip; the gospel of the Ebionites; the gospel of Jude; the gospel of the Encratites; the gospel of Cerinthus; the gospel of Merinthus; the gospel of Thaddeus; the gospel of Barnabas; the gospel of Andrew. And some he mentions besides, that are now extant; as, the gospel of our Saviour's infancy; the gospel of Nicodemus.

§ 14. Public societies cannot be maintained without trials and witnesses: And if witnesses are not firmly persuaded, that he who holds the supreme power over them, is omniscient, just, and powerful, and will revenge falsehood; there will be no dependance on their oaths, or most solemn declarations.—God therefore must be the Supreme Magistrate; society depends absolutely on him; and all kingdoms and communities are but provinces of his universal kingdom, who is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and Judge of Judges.—Thus, as mankind cannot subsist out of society, nor society itself subsist without religion; I mean, without faith in the infinite power, wisdom, and justice of God, and a judgment to come;

religion cannot be a falsehood. It is not credible, that all the happiness of mankind, the whole civil world, and peace, safety, justice, and truth itself, should have nothing to stand on but a lie : It is not to be supposed, that God would give the world no other foundation. So that religion is absolutely necessary, and must have some sure foundation. But there can be no good, sure foundation of religion, without mankind's having a right idea of God, and some sure and clear knowledge of him, and of our dependence on him. Lord Shaftesbury himself owns, that wrong ideas of God will hurt society, as much, if not more, than ignorance of him can do.

§ 15. Now, the question is, “ Whether nature and reason alone can give us a right idea of God, and are sufficient to establish among mankind a clear and sure knowledge of his nature, and the relation we stand in to him, and his concern with us ? It may well be questioned, whether any man hath this from the mere light of nature. Nothing can seem more strange, than that the wisest and most sagacious of all men, I mean the philosophers, should have searched with all imaginable candour and anxiety for this, and searched in vain, if the light of nature alone is sufficient to give it to, and establish it among, mankind in general.”—There never was a man known or heard of, who had an idea of God, without being taught it.—Whole sects of philosophers denied the very being of God ; and some have died martyrs to Atheism, as, *Vaninus, Jordanus, Bruno, Cosimir, Liszinsai, and Mahomet Effendi*.—A man, confined to a dungeon all his days, and deprived of all conversation with mankind, probably would not so much as once consider who made him, or whether he was made or not, nor entertain the least notion of God. There are many instances of people born absolutely deaf and blind, who never shewed the least sense of religion, or knowledge of God.

§ 16. It is one thing, to work out a demonstration of a point, when once it is proposed ; and another, to strike upon the point itself. I cannot tell, whether any man would have considered the works of creation, as effects, if he had never been told they had a cause. We know very well, that, even after the being of such a cause was much talked of in the world, and believed by the generality of mankind ; yet many and great philosophers held the world to be eternal ; and others ascribed, what we call the works of creation, to an eternal series of causes. If the most sagacious of the philosophers

were capable of doing this, after hearing so much of a first cause and a creation, what would they have done, and what would the gross of mankind, who are inattentive and ignorant, have thought of the matter, if nothing had been taught concerning God and the origin of things ; but every single man left solely to such intimation as his own senses and reason could have given him ? We find, the earlier ages of the world did not trouble themselves about the question, whether the being of God could be proved by reason ; but either never inquired into the matter, or took their opinions, upon that head, merely from tradition. But, allowing that every man is able to demonstrate to himself, that the world, and all things contained therein, are effects, and had a beginning, which I take to be a most absurd supposition, and look upon it to be almost impossible for unassisted reason to go so far : Yet, if effects are to be ascribed to similar causes, and a good and wise effect must suppose a good and wise cause ; by the same way of reasoning, all the evil and irregularity in the world must be attributed to an evil and unwise cause. So that either the first cause must be both good and evil, wise and foolish, or else there must be two first causes, an evil and irrational, as well as a good and wise principle. Thus, man left to himself, would be apt to reason, " If the cause and the effects are similar and conformable, matter must have a material cause ; there being nothing more impossible for us to conceive, than how matter should be produced by spirit, or any thing else but matter." The best reasoner in the world, endeavouring to find out the causes of things, by the things themselves, might be led into the grossest errors and contradictions, and find himself, at the end, in extreme want of an instructor.

§ 17. In all countries we are acquainted with, knowledge bears an exact proportion to instruction. Why does the learned and well educated, reason better than the mere citizen ? why the citizen better than the boor ? why the English boor better than the Spanish ? why the Spanish better than the Moorish ? why the Moorish better than the Negro ? and why he better than the Hottentot ? If, then, reason is found to go hand in hand, and step by step with education ; what would be the consequence, if there were no education ? There is no fallacy more gross, than to imagine reason, utterly untaught and undisciplined, capable of the same attainments in knowledge, as reason well refined and instructed : or to suppose, that reason can as easily find in itself principles to argue

from, as draw the consequences, when once they are found ; I mean, especially in respect to objects not perceivable by our senses. In ordinary articles of knowledge, our senses and experience furnish reason with ideas and principles to work on : continual conferences and debates give it exercise in such matters ; and that improves its vigour and activity. But, in respect to God, it can have no right idea nor axiom to set out with, till he is pleased to reveal it.

§ 18. What instance can be mentioned, from any history, of any one nation under the sun, that emerged from atheism or idolatry, into the knowledge or adoration of the One True God, without the assistance of revelation ? The Americans, the Africans, the Tartars, and the ingenious Chinese, have had time enough, one would think, to find out the true and right idea of God ; and yet, after above five thousand years improvements, and the full exercise of reason, they have, at this day, got no farther in their progress towards the true religion, than to the worship of stocks and stones and devils. How many thousand years must be allowed to these nations, to reason themselves into the true religion ? What the light of nature and reason could do to investigate the knowledge of God, is best seen by what they have already done. We cannot argue more convincingly on any foundation, than that of known and incontestable facts.

§ 19. Le Compte and Duhald assure us, the Chinese, after offering largely to their gods, and being disappointed of their assistance, sometimes sue them for damages, and obtain decrees against them from the Mandarin. This ingenious people, when their houses are on fire, to the imminent peril of their wooden gods, hold them to the flames, in hopes of extinguishing them by it. The Tyrians were a wise people ; and therefore, when Alexander laid siege to their city, they chained Apollo to Hercules, to prevent his giving them the slip.

§ 20. Revenge and self-murder were not only tolerated, but esteemed heroic by the best of the Heathen. I know not, in all profane history, six more illustrious characters, than those of Lycurgus, Timoleon, Cicero, Cato Uticensis, Brutus, and Germanicus. The first encouraged tricking and stealing, by an express law. The second, upon principle, murdered his own brother. Cicero, with all his fine talk about religion and

virtue, had very little of either ; as may appear by what he says, (I think it is in a letter to Atticus) on the death of his daughter Tullia, "I hate the very gods, who hitherto have been so profuse in their favours to me ;" and by deserting his friends and his country, and turning a servile flatterer to Cæsar. Brutus concludes all his mighty heroism with this exclamation : "Virtue, I have pursued thee in vain, and found thee to be but an empty name ;" and then kills himself. Cato's virtue was not strong enough to hinder his turning a public robber and oppressor, (witness his Cyprian expedition) ; nor to bear up against the calamities of life : and so he stabbed himself, and ran away, like a coward, from his country and the world. Germanicus, who exceeded all men in his natural sweetness of temper, at the approach of death, called his friends about him, and spent his last moments in pressing them to take revenge of Piso and Plencina, for poisoning or bewitching him ; in directing them how this might be best done ; and in receiving their oaths for the performance of his request. His sense of religion, he thus expressed on that occasion : "Had I died by the decree of fate, I should have had just cause of resentment against the gods, for hurrying me away from my parents, my wife and my children, in the flower of my youth, by an untimely death."

§ 21. Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, who were more inclined to the belief of a future existence. than the other philosophers, plead for it with arguments of no force : speak of it with the utmost uncertainty ; and therefore, are afraid to found their system of duty and virtue on the expectation of it. Their notions of morality were of a piece with their religion, and had little else for a foundation, than vain-glory. Tully, in his treatise of Friendship, says, that virtue proposes glory as its end, and hath no other reward. Accordingly, he maintains, that wars undertaken for glory, are not unlawful, provided they are carried on without the usual cruelty. Diogenes, and the sect of the Cynics, held, that parents have a right to sacrifice and eat their children ; and that there is nothing shameful in committing the grossest acts of lewdness publicly, and before the faces of mankind. The virtuous sentiments discovered by the philosophers on some occasions, will neither palliate these execrable principles, nor suffer us to think those who could abet them, fit instructors for mankind. Zeno, Cleombrotus, and Menippus, committed murder on themselves : the last, because he had lost a considerable

sum of money, which, as he was an usurer, went a little too near his heart. That I do not charge the philosophers with worse principles and practices, than they themselves maintain, and their own Pagan historians ascribe to them, any one may satisfy himself, who will consult Diogenes, Laertius, Sextus Empiricus, Lucian, Plutarch, and the works of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero.

§ 22. Thus, it is plain, whether we consider what the human understanding could do, or what it actually did, that it could not have attained to a sufficient knowledge of God, without revelation; so that the demonstration brought in favour of some religion, ends in a demonstration of the revealed. When we attentively consider the nature of man, we find it necessary he should have some religion. When we consider the nature of God, we must conclude he never would have made a falsehood necessary to the happiness of his rational creatures; and that therefore there must be a true religion. And when we consider, that, by our natural faculties, it is extremely difficult to arrive at a right idea of God, till he reveals it to us; that all the Gentile world hath run into the grossest theological errors, and, in consequence of these, into the most enormous customs and crimes; and that no legislator ever founded his scheme of civil government on any supposed religious dictates of nature, but always on some real or pretended revelation: We cannot help ascribing all the true religion in the world to divine instruction, and all the frightful variety of religious errors to human invention; and to that dark and degenerate nature, by the imaginary light of which, deists suppose the right idea of God may be easily and universally discovered.

§ 23. Socrates, who never travelled out of Greece, had nothing to erect a scheme of religion or morality on, but the scattered fragments of truth, handed down from time immemorial among his countrymen, or imported by Pythagoras, Thales, and others, who had been in Egypt and the east. These he picked out from an huge heap of absurdities and errors, under which they were buried; and, by the help of a most prodigious capacity, laying them together, comparing them with the nature of things, and drawing consequences from them, he found reason to question the soundness of the Grecian theology and morality. But this is all the length he seems to have gone: He reasoned extremely well against

the prevailing errors of his time ; but was able to form no system of religion or morality. This was a work above the strength of his nature, and the lights he enjoyed. He taught his disciples to worship the gods, and to ground the distinction between right and wrong on the laws of their country ; in the latter of which he followed the saying of his master, Archelaus, who taught, that what is just or dishonest, is defined by law, not by nature.

§ 24. The notions of Plato concerning the divine nature, were infinitely more sublime and nearer the truth, than those of his master, Socrates. He did not content himself merely with removing errors : He ventured on a system ; and maintained, that virtue is a science, and that God is the object and source of duty ; that there is but one God, the fountain of all being, and superior to all essence ; that he hath a Son, called The World : that there is a judgment to come, by which the just who have suffered in this life, shall be recompensed in the other, and the wicked punished eternally ; that God is omnipresent : and consequently, that the wicked, if he were to dive into the deepest caverns of the earth, or should get wings, and fly into the heavens, would not be able to escape from him : that man is formed in the image of God ; and that, in order to establish laws and government, relations made by true traditions and ancient oracles, are to be consulted. These points, so much insisted on by Plato, are far from being the growth of Greece, or his own invention, but derived from Eastern traditions, which we know he travelled for, at least as far as Egypt. He was wiser than his teacher, (who was a much greater man) because his lights were better : But, as they were not sufficient, he ran into great errors, speaking plainly as if he believed in a plurality of gods ; making gods, women, and children, common, &c.

§ 25. The natural faculties of men, in all nations, are alike : and did nature itself furnish all men with the means and materials of knowledge, philosophy need never turn traveller, either in order to her own improvement, or to the communication of her lights to the world. How came it to pass that Scythia did not produce so many, so great philosophers, as Greece ? I think it very evident, that the great difference between these countries as to learning and instruction, arose from this : The latter had the benefit of commerce with the

Phœnicians, from whence they came by the knowledge of letters, and probably of navigation ; and with the Egyptians, from whom they learned the greater part of their theology, policy, arts and sciences. Such advantages the Scythians wanted ; and therefore, although their natural talents were as good as those of the Grecians, they were not able to make any improvements in philosophy. Why are the Asiatic Scythians at this day as ignorant as ever, while the European Scythians are little inferior to the other nations of Europe in arts and politeness ? And how does it come to pass, that we, at this day, take upon us to approve the philosophy of Socrates and Plato, rather than that of Epicurus and Aristippus ? The Grecians were divided in this matter : some followed the notions of the former, and others those of the latter. Why did not reason put the matter out of question in those times, or at least immediately after ? The infinite contradictions and uncertainties among the ancient philosophers produced the sects of the Sceptics. In respect to religion, Socrates and Plato either were, or pretended to be, sceptics, beating down the absurd notions of others, but seldom building up any thing of their own ; or, when they did, building on mere conjectures, or arguments suspected by themselves.

§ 26. If it be said, the finding out of truth by the light of nature, is a work of time ; time hath taught the Tartars, Africans and Americans, little or nothing of true theology or morality, even yet. Time, of itself, can search nothing. It was the Christian religion that opened the eyes of the polite nations of Europe, and even of the deists of this age, wherein their eyes are still open, and they have any true principles by which they are able to examine the philosophy of the ancients, and, by comparing their several opinions one with another, and with the truths derived from the Christian revelation, to decide in favour of some against the rest.

§ 27. As to the doctrine of THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL ; it is certain nothing can be more agreeable to reason, when once the doctrine is proposed and thoroughly canvassed ; while, at the same time, there is no one probable opinion in the world, which mankind, left entirely to themselves, would have been more unlikely to have started. Who, if he was not assured of it by good authority, would ever take it into his head to imagine, that man, who dies, and rots, and vanishes

for ever, like all other animals, still exists? It is well, if this, when proposed, can be believed; but, to strike out the thought itself, is somewhat, I am afraid, too high and difficult for the capacity of men. The only natural argument, of any weight, for the immortality of the soul, takes its rise from this observation, that justice is not extended to the good, nor executed upon the bad man in this life; and that, as the Governor of the world is just, man must live hereafter to be judged. But as this only argument that can be drawn from mere reason, in order either to lead us to a discovery of our own immortality, or to support the opinion of it when once started, is founded entirely on the knowledge of God and his attributes; and as we have already seen, that such knowledge is almost unattainable by the present light of nature, the argument itself, which, before the fall, could not possibly have been thought of, is, since the fall, clogged with all the difficulties mere reason labours under, in finding out a right idea of God. And besides, this argument in itself, is utterly inconclusive, on the principles of the deists of our age and nation: because they insist that virtue fully rewards, and vice fully punishes itself. It is no wonder that many heathen nations believed a future state, as they received it by tradition from their ancestors.—But yet, there is this evidence that mankind had not this doctrine merely from the easy and plain dictates of reason and nature, that many did not believe it.

§ 28. Socrates, in the Phædon of Plato, says, most men were of opinion, that the soul, upon its separation from the body, is dissipated and reduced to nothing. And Tully, in his first Tusculan question, says, Pherecides Syrus, preceptor to Pythagoras, was the first person known to the learned world, who taught the immortality of the soul. The other arguments brought by Plato and Cicero for the immortality of the soul, besides that already mentioned, are very inconclusive. They themselves thought so. The former, in his Phædon, makes Socrates speak with some doubt concerning his own arguments, and introduces Simias saying to Socrates, after having listened to his principal reasonings, “We ought to lay hold of the strongest arguments for this doctrine, that either we ourselves, or others can suggest to us. If both ways prove ineffectual, we must however put up with the best proofs we can get, till some *promise* or *revelation* shall clear up the point to us.”—One of Plato’s arguments for the immortality of the soul, is this: “Every cause produces an effect contrary to itself; and

that, therefore, as life produces death, so death shall produce life." Cicero, to prove that the soul will exist after it is separated from the body, endeavours to prove that it existed before it was joined to it; and to that end he insists, "that what we call aptness in children to learn, is nothing more than memory." Another argument of Plato is this: "That alone which moves itself, inasmuch as it is never deserted by itself, never ceases to move: but the mind moves itself, and borrows not its motion from any thing else, and therefore must move, and consequently exist for ever."

The wisdom of Socrates and Plato united, produce such arguments for a most favourite opinion, as they themselves are dissatisfied with, and therefore call for more than human help.

§ 29. Cicero being so fond of this opinion, that, as he says, he would rather err with Plato in holding it, than think rightly with those who deny it, poorly echoes the arguments of Plato; adds little to them himself; and, at the conclusion, in a manner giving up the point, with all the arguments brought to support it, endeavours to comfort himself and others against the approach of death, by proving death to be no evil, even supposing the soul to perish with the body. And this great philosopher, with all his knowledge, gives but one lot to the good and evil in another life. It was his opinion, *If the soul is immortal, it must be happy: if it perishes with the body, it cannot be miserable.* This consolation he administers alike to all men, without making any distinction, and consequently leaves moral obligation on a mere temporal footing, which, in effect, is not a whit better than downright atheism. But in his dream of Scipio, when he does not reason nor seem to inculcate any particular doctrine, he indeed introduces the elder Scipio telling the younger, by way of dream, that those who served their country, and cultivated justice and the other virtues, should go to heaven after death: But that the souls of those that had violated the laws of the gods and men, should, after leaving their bodies, be tossed about on the earth, and not return to heaven for many ages. Now, if a person of Cicero's abilities and learning could, from the light of nature, work out no better scheme than this, which renders futurity almost useless to moral obligation, how much farther from truth and reason must we suppose the bulk of mankind to stray, if each ignorant person is to be left entirely to his own thoughts

and discoveries, in respect to the future rewards of virtue, and punishments of vice ?

§ 30. Thus, upon considering the extent and strength of human faculties, we have found them at present utterly incapable of attaining to any competent notion of a divine law, if left wholly to themselves. This is vastly confirmed by experience ; from which it appears, that mankind, instead of being able, through a long series of ages, by the mere light of nature, to find out a right idea of God and his laws ; on the contrary—after having, without doubt, been well acquainted at first with both—gradually, and at length almost universally, lost sight of both ; insomuch, that idolatry as bad as Atheism, and wickedness worse than brutality, were established for religion and law in all countries. The philosophers who lived in the most knowing countries, and sought for religion and moral truth, but sought in vain, as the wisest of them confess, render this argument still more cogent and conclusive.

§ 31. As the apostle Paul observes in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, men did not like to retain God in their knowledge ; and, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Thus were their foolish hearts darkened ; upon which God gave them over to a reprobate mind, and gave them up to uncleanness, to sins of all kinds, even such as were utterly against nature. St. Chrysostom, in his descant on this passage, says, “The Gentiles fell into a kind of madness, insomuch, that having deprived themselves of the light, and involved their minds in the darkness of their own thoughts, their attempt to travel towards heaven ended in a miserable shipwreck, as his must do, who, in a dark night, undertakes a voyage by sea.” Being guided by conceit, and too great an attachment to sensible things, they entered upon a wrong way ; so that, still the longer they travelled, the farther they wandered from the knowledge of the true God, and right religion. The doctrine of St. Paul, concerning the blindness into which the Gentiles fell, is so confirmed by the state of religion in Africa, America, and even China, where, to this day, no advances towards the true religion have been made, that we can no longer be at a loss to judge of the insufficiency of unassisted reason, to dis-

sipate the prejudices of the Heathen world, and open their eyes to religious truths.

§ 32. The starting of a proposition is one thing, and the proof of it quite another. Every science has its proofs in the nature of things. Yet all sciences require to be taught; and those require it most, the first principles of which lie a little out of the reach of ordinary capacities. The first principles of religion, being of a high and spiritual nature, are harder to be found out than those of any other science; because the minds of men are gross and earthly, used to objects of sense; and all their depraved appetites and corrupt dispositions, which are by nature opposite to the true religion, help to increase the natural weakness of their reason, and clip the wings of their contemplation, when they endeavour, by their own strength, to soar towards God and heavenly things. No man in his, nor hardly in any other time, knew better how to catch at the evidence of divine truths discovered in the works of creation, nor had better opportunities, than Plato. Yet, with all the help he derived from foreign and domestic instruction, he finds himself on every occasion at a loss. When he speaks of God and divine matters, he relies on oracles, traditions, and revelations; and having got a little taste of this kind of instruction, is every now and then confessing his want of more, and wishing for it with the greatest anxiety. And, not thinking the traditions which he was acquainted with sufficient, he talks of a future instructor to be sent from God, to teach the world a more perfect knowledge of religious duties. "The truth is," (says he, speaking in his first book *De Legibus*, concerning future rewards and punishments), "to determine or establish any thing certain about these matters, in the midst of so many doubts and disputations, is the work of God only." In his *Phædon*, one of the speakers says to Socrates concerning the *Immortality of the Soul*, "I am of the same opinion with you, that in this life, it is either absolutely impossible, or extremely difficult, to arrive at a clear knowledge in this matter." In the apology he wrote for Socrates, he puts these words into his mouth, on the subject of reformation of manners: "You may pass the remainder of your days in sleep, or despair of finding out a sufficient expedient for this purpose, if God, in his providence, doth not send you some other instructor." And in his *Epinomis* he says, "Let no man take upon him to teach, if God do not lead the way."

§ 33. In the book *De Mundo*, ascribed to Aristotle, we have a remarkable passage to this effect: "It is an old tradition, almost universally received, that all things proceeded from God, and subsist through him; and that no nature is self-sufficient, or independent of God's protection and assistance." In his *Metaphysics*, he ascribes the belief of the gods, and of this, that the Deity compasses and comprehends all nature, to a traditionary habit of speaking, handed down from the first men to after ages. Cicero, in his treatise concerning the nature of the gods, introduces Cotta blaming those who endeavoured, by argumentation, to prove there are gods, and affirming that this only served to make the point doubtful, which, by the instructions and traditions of their forefathers, had been sufficiently made known to them, and established. Plutarch, speaking of the worship paid to a certain ideal divinity, which his friend had called in question, says, "It is enough to believe pursuant to the faith of our ancestors, and the instructions communicated to us in the country where we were born and bred; than which, we can neither find out, nor apply, any argument more to be depended on."

§ 34. It will be further useful to observe, that the thoughts of men, with regard to any internal law, will be always mainly influenced by their sentiments concerning the *Chief Good*. Whatsoever power or force may do in respect to the outward actions of a man, nothing can oblige him to think or act, as often as he is at liberty, against what he takes to be his chief good or interest. No law, nor system of laws, can possibly answer the end and purpose of a law, till the grand question, what is the chief happiness and end of man, be determined, and so cleared up, that every man may be fully satisfied about it. Before our Saviour's time, the world was infinitely divided on this important head. The philosophers were miserably bewildered in all their researches after the chief good. Each sect, each subdivision of a sect, had a chief good of its own, and rejected all the rest. They advanced, as Varro tells us, no fewer than 288 opinions in relation to this matter; which shews, by a strong experiment, that the light of nature was altogether unable to settle the difficulty. Every man, if left to the particular bias of his own nature, chooses out a chief good for himself, and lays the stress of all his thoughts and actions on it. Now, if the supposed chief good of any man should lead him, as it often does, to violate the laws of society, to hurt others, and act against the general good of

mankind, he will be very unfit for society; and consequently, as he cannot subsist out of it, an enemy to himself.

§ 35. If Christianity came too late into the world, what is called natural religion came full as late; and there are no footsteps of natural religion, in any sense of the words, to be found at this day, but where Christianity hath been planted. In every place else, religion hath no conformity with reason or truth. So far is the light of nature from lending sufficient assistance. It is strange, that the natural light should be so clear, and yet the natural darkness so great, that in all unassisted countries the most monstrous forms of religion, derogatory to God, and prejudicial to man, should be contrived by some, and swallowed by the rest, with a most voracious credulity. I could wish most heartily, that all nations were Christians; yet, since it is otherwise, we derive this advantage from it, that we have a standing and contemporary demonstration of that which nature, left to herself, can do. Had all the world been Christians for some ages past, our present libertines would insist, that Christianity had done no service to mankind; that nature could have sufficiently directed herself; and that all the stories told, either in sacred or profane history, of the idolatry and horrible forms of religion in ancient times, were forged by Christian priests, to make the world think revelation necessary, and natural reason incapable of dictating true and right notions of religion. But, as the case stands at present, we have such proofs of the insufficiency of unassisted reason in this behalf, as all the subtilty of libertines is unable to evade.

§ 36. All that the Grecians, Romans, and present Chinese, know of true religion, they were taught traditionally. As to their corrupt notions and idolatries, they were of their own invention. The Grecians, who were by far the most knowing people of the three, were as gross idolators as the rest, till Plato's time. He travelled into the east, and ran higher towards truth in his sentiments of religion, than others: but still worshipped the gods of his country, and durst not speak out all he knew. However, he formed a great school, and, both through his writings and scholars, instructed his countrymen in a kind of religious philosophy, that tended much more directly and strongly to reformation of manners, than either the dictates of their own reason, or of their other philosophers. All the philosophy of the Gentile nations, excepting that of Socrates and Plato, was derived from the source

of self-sufficiency. Only these two acknowledge the blindness of human nature, and the necessity of a divine instructor. No other Heathen philosopher founded his morality on any sense of religion, or ever dreamt of an inability in man to render himself happy.*

CHAP. VII.

The Insufficiency of Reason as a substitute for Revelation.

§ 1. By reason, I mean that power or faculty an intelligent being has to judge of the truth of propositions; either immediately, by only looking on the propositions, which is judging by intuition and self-evidence; or by putting together several propositions, which are already evident by intuition, or at least whose evidence is originally derived from intuition.

Great part of Tindal's arguing, in his *Christianity as old as the creation*, proceeds on this ground, That since reason is the judge whether there be any revelation, or whether any pretended revelation be really such; therefore reason, *without* revelation, or *undirected* by revelation, must be the judge concerning each doctrine and proposition contained in that pretended revelation. This is an unreasonable way of arguing. It is as much as to say, that seeing reason is to judge of the truth of any *general* proposition, therefore, in all cases, reason alone, without regard to that proposition, is to judge separately and independently of each particular proposition implied in, or depending and consequent upon, that general proposition. For, whether any supposed or pretended divine revelation be indeed such, is a general proposition: and the particular truths delivered in and by it, are particular propositions implied in, and consequent on, that general one. Tindal supposes each of these truths must be judged of by themselves, independently of our judging of that general truth, that the revelation that declares them is the word of God; evidently supposing, that if each of these propositions, thus judged of particularly, cannot be found to be agreeable to reason, or if reason alone will not shew the truth of them; then, that general proposition on which they depend, viz. That the word which declares them is a divine revelation, is to

* From § 14.—§ 36. is chiefly out of "Deism Revealed," Second Edition.

be rejected: which is most unreasonable, and contrary to all the rules of common sense, and of the proceeding of all mankind, in their reasoning and judging of things in all affairs whatsoever.—For this is certain, that a proposition may be evidently true, or we may have good reason to receive it as true, though the particular propositions that depend upon it, and follow from it, may be such, that our reason, independent of it, cannot see the truth, or can see it to be true by no other means, than by first establishing that other truth on which it depends. For otherwise, there is an end of all use of our reasoning powers; an end of all arguing one proposition from another; and nothing is to be judged true, but what appears true by looking on it directly and immediately, without the help of another proposition first established, on which the evidence of it depends.—For therein consists all reasoning or argumentation whatsoever; viz. in discovering the truth of a proposition, whose truth does not appear to our reason immediately, or when we consider it alone, but by the help of some other proposition on which it depends.

§ 2. If this be not allowed, we must believe nothing at all, but self-evident propositions, and then we must have done with all such things as arguments: and all argumentation whatsoever, and all Tindal's argumentations in particular, are absurd. He himself, throughout his whole book, proceeds in that very method which this principle explodes. He argues, and attempts to make evident, one proposition, by another first established.—There are some general propositions, the truth of which can be known only by reason, from whence an infinite multitude of other propositions are inferred, and reasonably and justly determined to be true, and rested in as such, on the ground of the truth of that general proposition from which they are inferred by the common consent of all mankind, being led thereto by the common and universal sense of the human mind. And yet not one of those propositions can be known to be true by reason, if reason consider them by themselves independently of that general proposition.

Thus, for instance, what numberless truths are known only by consequence from that general proposition, that the testimony of our senses may be depended on? The truth of numberless particular propositions, cannot be known by reason, considered independently of the testimony of our senses, and without an implicit faith in that testimony. That general

truth, that the testimony of our memories is worthy of credit, can be proved only by reason; and yet, what numberless truths are there, which we know no other way, and cannot be known to be true by reason, considering the truths in themselves, or any otherwise than by testimony of our memory, and an implicit faith in this testimony? That the agreed testimony of all we see, and converse with continually, is to be credited, is a general proposition, the truth of which can be known only by reason. And yet, how infinitely numerous propositions do men receive as truth, that cannot be known to be true by reason, viewing them separately from such testimony; even all occurrences, and matters of fact, persons, things, actions, works, events, and circumstances, that we are told of in our neighbourhood, in our own country, or in any other part of the world that we have not seen ourselves?

§ 3. That the testimony of history and tradition is to be depended on, when attended with such and such credible circumstances, is a general proposition, whose truth can be known only by reason. And yet, how numberless are the particular truths concerning what has been before the present age, that cannot be known by reason, considered in themselves, and separately from this testimony, which yet are truths on which all mankind do, ever did, and ever will rely?

That the experience of mankind is to be depended on; or, that those things which the world finds to be true by experience, are worthy to be judged true; is a general proposition, of which none doubt. By what the world finds true by experience can be meant nothing else, than what is known to be true by one or other of those forementioned kinds of testimony, viz. the testimony of history and tradition; the testimony of those we see and converse with; the testimony of our memories; and the testimony of our senses. I say, all that is known by the experience of mankind, is known only by one or more of these testimonies; excepting only the existence of that idea, or those few ideas, which are at this moment present in our minds, or are the immediate objects of present consciousness. And yet, how unreasonable would it be to say, that we must first know those things to be true by reason, before we give credit to our experience of the truth of them? Not only are there innumerable truths, that are reasonably received as following from such general pro-

positions as have been mentioned, which cannot be known by reason, if they are considered by themselves, or otherwise than as inferred from these general propositions; but also, many truths are reasonably received, and are received by the common consent of the reason of all rational persons, as undoubted truths, whose truth not only would not otherwise be discoverable by reason, but, when they are discovered by their consequence from that general proposition, appear in themselves not easy, and reconcilable to reason, but difficult, incomprehensible, and their agreement with reason not understood. So that men, at least most men, are not able to explain, or conceive of the manner in which they are agreeable to reason.

§ 4. Thus, for instance, it is a truth, which depends on that general proposition, that credit is to be given to the testimony of our senses, that our souls and bodies are so united, that they act on each other. But it is a truth which reason otherwise cannot discover, and, now that it is revealed by the testimony of our senses, reason cannot comprehend, That what is immaterial, and not solid nor extended, can act upon matter. Or, if any choose to say, that the soul is material, then other difficulties arise as great. For reason cannot imagine any way, that a solid mass of matter, whether at rest or in motion, should have perception, should understand, and should exert thought and volition, love, hatred, &c. And if it be said that spirit acts on matter, and matter on spirit, by an established law of the Creator, which is no other than a fixed method of his producing effects; still the manner how it is possible to be, will be inconceivable. We can have no conception of any way or manner, in which God, who is a pure Spirit, can act upon matter, and impel it.

There are several things in mechanics and hydrostatics, that by the testimony of our senses are true in fact, not only that reason never first discovered before the testimony of sense declared them, but, now they are declared, are very great paradoxes, and, if proposed, would seem contrary to reason, at least to the reason of the generality of mankind, and such as are not either mathematicians, or of more than common penetration, and what they cannot reconcile to their reason. But God has given reason to the common people, to be as much their guide and rule, as he has to mathematicians and philosophers.

§ 5. Even the very existence of a sensible world, which we receive for certain from the testimony of our senses, is attended with difficulties and seeming inconsistencies with reason, which are insuperable to the reason at least of most men. For, if there be a sensible world, that world exists either *in* the mind only, or *out* of the mind, independent of its imagination or perception. If the *latter*, then that sensible world is some material substance, altogether diverse from the ideas we have by any of our senses—as *colour*, or *visible extension* and *figure*, which is nothing but the quantity of colour and its various limitation, which are sensible qualities that we have by *sight*; and *solidity*, which is an idea we have by *feeling*; and *extension* and *figure*, which is only the quantity and limitation of these; and so of all other qualities.—But that there should be any substance entirely distinct from any, or all of these, is utterly inconceivable. For, if we exclude all colour, solidity, or conceivable extension, dimension and figure, what is there left, that we can conceive of? Is there not a removal in our minds of all existence, and a perfect emptiness of every thing?

But, if it be said, that the sensible world has no existence, but only *in the mind*, then the sensories themselves, or the organs of sense, by which sensible ideas are let into the mind, have no existence but only in the mind; and those organs of sense have no existence, but what is conveyed into the mind by themselves; for they are a part of the sensible world. And then it will follow, that the organs of sense owe their existence to the organs of sense, and so are prior to themselves, being the causes or occasions of their own existence; which is a seeming inconsistency with reason, that, I imagine, the reason of all men cannot explain and remove.

§ 6. There are innumerable propositions, that we reasonably receive from the testimony of experience, all depending on the truth of that general proposition, “that experience is to be relied on,” (what is meant by *experience* has been already explained), that yet are altogether above reason. They are paradoxes attended with such seeming inconsistencies, that reason cannot clearly remove, nor fully explain the mystery.

By experience we know that there is such a thing as thought, love, hatred, &c. But yet this is attended with inexplicable difficulties. If there be such a thing as thought and affection, where are they? If they exist, they exist in

some place, or no place. That they should exist, and exist in no place, is above our comprehension. It seems a contradiction, to say, they exist, and yet exist nowhere. And, if they exist in some place, then they are not in other places, or in all places; and therefore must be confined, at one time, to one place, and that place must have certain limits; from whence it will follow, that thought, love, &c. have some figure, either round, or square, or triangular; which seems quite disagreeable to reason, and utterly inconsonant to the nature of such things as thought and the affections of the mind.

§ 7. It is evident, by experience, that *something now is*. But this proposition is attended with things that reason cannot comprehend, paradoxes that seem contrary to reason. For, if something now *is*, then either something was from all eternity; or, something began to be, without any cause or reason of its existence. The *last* seems wholly inconsistent with natural sense: And the *other*, viz. That something has been from all eternity, implies, that there has been a duration past, which is without any beginning, which is an infinite duration: which is perfectly inconceivable, and is attended with difficulties that seem contrary to reason. For we cannot conceive how an infinite duration can be made greater, any more than how a line of infinite length can be made longer. But yet we see that past duration is continually added to. If there were a duration past without beginning, a thousand years ago, then that past infinite duration has now a thousand years added to it: And, if so, it is greater than it was before by a thousand years; because the whole is greater than a part. Now, the past duration consists of two parts, viz. that which was before the last thousand years, and that which is since. Thus here are seeming contradictions, involved in this supposition of an infinite duration past.

And, moreover, if something has been from eternity, it is either—an endless succession of causes and effects, as, for instance, an endless succession of fathers and sons, or something equivalent; but the supposition is attended with manifold apparent contradictions: or, there must have been some eternal self-existent being, having the reasons of his existence within himself: or, he must have existed from eternity, without any reason of his existence: both which are inconceivable. That a thing should exist from eternity, without any reason why it should be so, rather than otherwise, is altogether in-

conceivable, and seems quite repugnant to reason. And why a being should be self-existent, and have the reason of his existence within himself, seems also inconceivable, and never, as I apprehend, has yet been explained. If there has been any thing from eternity, then that past eternity is either an endless duration of successive parts, as successive hours, minutes, &c. or it is an eternal duration without succession.—The latter seems repugnant to reason, and incompatible with any faculty of understanding that we enjoy: And the other, an infinite number of successive parts, involves the very same contradictions with the supposition of an eternal succession of fathers and sons.

That the world has existed *from eternity without a cause*, seems wholly inconsistent with reason. In the first place, it is inconsistent with reason, that it should exist without a cause. For it is evident, that it is not a thing, the nature and manner of which is necessary in itself; and therefore it requires a cause or reason out of itself, why it is so, and not otherwise. And, in the next place, if it exists from eternity, then succession has been from eternity; which involves the forementioned contradictions. But, if it be without a cause, and does not exist from eternity, then it has been created out of nothing; which is altogether inconceivable, and what reason cannot shew to be possible; and many of the greatest philosophers have supposed it plainly inconsistent with reason.—Many other difficulties might be mentioned as following from that proposition, “that something now is,” that are insuperable to reason.

§ 8. It is evident, by *experience*, that *great evil*, both moral and natural *abounds in the world*. It is manifest, that great injustice, violence, treachery, perfidiousness, and extreme cruelty to the innocent, abound in the world; as well as innumerable extreme sufferings, issuing finally in destruction and death, are general all over the world, in all ages.—But this could not *otherwise* have been known by reason; and even now is attended with difficulties, which the reason of many, yea most of the learned men and greatest philosophers that have been in the world, have not been able to surmount. That it should be so ordered or permitted in a world, absolutely and perfectly under the care and government of an infinitely holy and good God, discovers a seeming repugnancy to reason, that few, if any, have been able fully to remove.

§ 9. That *men are to be blamed or commended for their good or evil voluntary actions*, is a general proposition received, with good reason, by the dictates of the natural, common, and universal moral sense of mankind in all nations and ages: which moral sense is included in what Tindal means by reason and the law of nature. And yet many things attend this truth, that appear difficulties and seeming repugnancies to reason, which have proved altogether insuperable to the reason of many of the greatest and most learned men in the world.

§ 10. I observe, further, that when any general proposition is recommended to us as true, by any testimony or evidence, that, considered by itself, seems sufficient, without contrary testimony or evidence to countervail it; and difficulties attend that proposition: if these difficulties are no greater, and of no other sort, than what might reasonably be expected to attend true propositions of that kind, then these difficulties are not only no valid or sufficient objection against that proposition, but they are no objection at all.

Thus, there are many things that I am told concerning the effects of electricity, magnetism, &c. and many things that are recorded in the philosophical transactions of the Royal Society, which I have never seen, and are very mysterious: But, being well attested, their mysteriousness is no manner of objection against my belief of the accounts; because, from what I have observed, and do know, such a mysteriousness is no other than is to be expected in a particular, exact observation of nature, and a critical tracing of its operations. It is to be expected, that the farther it is traced, the more mysteries will appear. To apply this to the case in hand: If the difficulties which attend that which is recommended by good proof or testimony to our reception, as a divine revelation, are no greater, nor of any other nature, than such as, all things considered, might reasonably be expected to attend a revelation of such a sort, of things of such a nature, and given for such ends and purposes, and under such circumstances; these difficulties not only are not of weight sufficient to balance the testimony or proof that recommends it, but they are of no weight at all as objections against the revelation. They are not reasonably to be looked upon as of the nature of arguments against it; but, on the contrary, may, with good reason, be looked upon as confirmations, and of the nature of arguments in its favour.

§ 11. This is very evident, and the reason of it very plain. For, certainly, whatever is reasonably expected to be found in a truth, when we are seeking it, cannot be an objection against that truth, when we have found it. If it be reasonably expected in truth beforehand, then reason unites it with truth, as one property of that sort of truth: and, if so, then reason unites it with the truth, after it is found. Whatever reason determines to be a property of any kind of truth, that is properly looked upon in some degree as a mark of truths of that sort, or as belonging to the marks and evidences of it: for things are known by their properties. Reason determines truth by things which reason determines to be the properties of truth. And, if we do not find such things belonging to supposed truth, that were before reasonably expected in truth of that kind, this is an objection against it, rather than the finding of them. The disappointment of reason is rather an objection with reason, than something to induce its acceptance and acquiescence. If the expectation be reasonable, then the not answering of it must so far appear unreasonable, or against reason, and so an objection in the way of reason.

Thus, if any one that is in search for things of a certain kind, reasonably expects beforehand, that if he be successful in finding the thing, of the kind and quality that he is in search of, he shall find it possessed of certain properties: when he hath actually found something, with all those properties and circumstances that he expected, he receives it, and rests in it so much the more entirely, as the very thing that he was in quest of. And, surely, it would be no argument with him, that his invention is right, that some things, that he reasonably expected, are wanting: but, on the contrary, this would rather be an objection with his reason.

§ 12. In order to judge what sort of difficulties are to be expected in a revelation made to mankind by God, such as Christians suppose the Scriptures to be, we must remember, that it is a revelation of what God knows to be the very truth concerning his own nature; of the acts and operations of his mind with respect to his creatures; of the grand scheme of infinite wisdom in his works, especially with respect to the intelligent and moral world; a revelation of the spiritual and invisible world; a revelation of that invisible world which men shall belong to after this life; a revelation of the greatest works of God, the manner of his creating the world, and of his governing of it, especially with regard to the higher and

more important parts of it; a revelation delivered in ancient languages.

Difficulties and incomprehensible mysteries are reasonably to be expected in a declaration from God, of the precise truth as he knows it, in matters of a spiritual nature; as we see things that are invisible, and not the objects of any of the external senses, are very mysterious, involved much more in darkness, attended with more mystery and difficulty to the understanding, than others; as many things concerning even the nature of our own souls themselves, that are the nearest to us, and the most intimately present with us, and so most in our view, of any spiritual things whatsoever.

The farther things are from the nature of what language is chiefly formed to express, viz. things appertaining to the common business and vulgar affairs of life—things obvious to sense and men's direct view and most vulgar observation, without speculation, reflection and abstraction—the more difficult it is clearly to express them in words. Our expressions concerning them, will be attended with greater abstruseness, difficulty, and seeming inconsistency; language not being well fitted to express these things; words and phrases not being prepared for that end. Such a reference to sensible and vulgar things, is unavoidably introduced, that naturally confounds the mind, and involves it in darkness.

§ 13. If God gives a revelation of religious things, it must be mainly concerning the affairs of the moral and intelligent universe: which is the grand system of spirits: It must be chiefly about himself and intelligent creatures. It may well be supposed, that a revelation concerning another and an invisible world, a future state that we are to be in when separated from the body, should be attended with much mystery. It may well be supposed, that the things of such a world, are of an exceeding different nature from the things of this world, the things of sense, and all the objects and affairs which earthly language was made to express; and that they are not agreeable to such notions, imaginations, and ways of thinking that grow up with us, and are connatural to us, as we are from our infancy formed to an agreeableness to the things which we are conversant with in this world. We could not conceive of the things of *sense*, if we had never had these external senses. And, if we had only some of these senses, and not others; as, for instance, if we had only a sense of feeling, without the

senses of seeing and hearing, how mysterious would a declaration of things of these last senses be! Or, if we had feeling and hearing, but had been born without eyes or optic nerves, the things of light, even when declared to us, would many of them be involved in mystery, and would appear exceedingly strange to us.

§ 14. Thus, persons without the sense of seeing, but who had the other senses, might be informed by all about them, that they can perceive things at a distance, and perceive as plainly, and in some respects more plainly, than by touching them: yea, that they could perceive things at so great a distance, that it would take up many ages to travel to them. They might be informed of many things concerning colours, that would all be perfectly incomprehensible, and yet might be believed; and it could not be said that nothing at all is proposed to their belief, because they have no idea of colour.

They might be told that they perceive an extension, a length and breadth of colour, and terminations and limits, and so a figure of this kind of extension; and yet, that it is nothing that can be felt. This would be perfectly mysterious to them, and would seem an inconsistency, as they have no ideas of any such things as length, breadth, and limits, and figure of extension, but only certain ideas they have by touch. They might be informed, that they could perceive *at once* the extent and shape of a thing so great and multiform as a tree, without touch: This would seem very strange and impossible.—They might be told, that, to those who see, some things appear a thousand times as great as some others, which yet are made up of more visible parts, than those others: which would be very mysterious, and seem quite inconsistent with reason.—These, and many other things, would be attended with unsearchable mystery to them, concerning objects of sight; and, concerning which, they could never fully see how they can be reconciled to reason; at least, not without very long, particular, gradual, and elaborate instruction; and which, after all, they would not fully comprehend, so as clearly to see how the ideas connected in these propositions do agree.—And yet I suppose, in such a case, the most rational persons would give full credit to things that they know not by reason, but only by the revelation of the word of those that see. I suppose, a person born blind in the manner described, would nevertheless give full credit to the united testimony of the

seeing world, in things which they said about light and colours, and would entirely rest on their testimony.

§ 15. If God give us a revelation of the truth, not only about spiritual beings, in an unseen state; but also concerning a spiritual being or beings of a superior kind, (and so of an unexperienced nature,) entirely diverse from any thing we now experience in our present state,—and from any thing that we can be conscious of in any state whatsoever—then, especially, may mysteries be expected in such a revelation.

The truth concerning any kind of percipient being, of a different nature from our own, though of a kind inferior, might well be supposed to be attended with difficulty, by reason of its diversity from what we are conscious of in ourselves: but, much more so, when the nature and kind is superior. For a superior perceptive nature may well be supposed, in some respects, to include and comprehend what belongs to an inferior, as the greater comprehends the less, and the whole includes a part; and therefore, what the superior experiences may give him advantage to conceive of concerning the nature of the inferior. But, on the contrary, an inferior nature does not include what belongs to a superior. When one of an inferior nature considers what concerns beings of a nature entirely above his own, there is something belonging to it that is over and above all that the inferior nature is conscious of.

A very great superiority, even in beings of the same nature with ourselves, sets them so much above our reach, that many of their affairs become incomprehensible, and attended with inexplicable intricacies. Thus many of the affairs of adult persons are incomprehensible, and appear inexplicably strange to the understandings of little children: and many of the affairs of learned men, and great philosophers and mathematicians, things with which they are conversant, and well acquainted, are far above the reach of the vulgar, and appear to them not only unintelligible, but absurd and impossible, and full of inconsistencies. But much more may this be expected, when the superiority is not only in the degree of improvement of faculties and properties of the same kind of beings, but also in the nature itself. So that, if there be a kind of created perceptive beings, in their nature vastly superior to the human, which none will deny to be possible, and a revelation should be given us concerning the nature, acts, and operations of this kind of creatures; it would be no wonder, if such a revelation should contain some things very much out of our reach,

attended with great difficulty to our reason, being things of such a kind, that no improvement of our minds, that we are capable of, will bring us to an experience of any thing like them. But, above all, if a revelation be made us concerning that Being who is uncreated and self-existent, who is infinitely diverse from and above all others, in his nature, and so infinitely above all that any advancement of our nature can give us any consciousness of: In such a revelation, it would be very strange indeed, if there should not be some great mysteries, quite beyond our comprehension, and attended with difficulties which it is impossible for us fully to solve and explain.

§ 16. It may well be expected, that a revelation of truth, concerning an infinite Being, should be attended with mystery. We find, that the reasonings and conclusions of the best metaphysicians and mathematicians, concerning infinities, are attended with paradoxes and seeming inconsistencies. Thus it is concerning infinite lines, surfaces, and solids, which are things external. But much more may this be expected in infinite spiritual things; such as, infinite thought, infinite apprehension, infinite reason, infinite will, love and joy, infinite spiritual power, agency, &c.

Nothing is more certain, than that there *must* be an unmade and unlimited Being; and yet, the very notion of such a Being is all mystery, involving nothing but incomprehensible paradoxes, and seeming inconsistencies. It involves the notion of a Being, self-existent and without any cause, which is utterly inconceivable, and seems repugnant to all our ways of conception. An infinite spiritual Being, or infinite understanding and will and spiritual power, must be omnipresent, without extension; which is nothing but mystery and seeming inconsistency.

The notion of an infinite Eternal, implies absolute immutability. That which is in all respects infinite, absolutely perfect, to the utmost degree, and at all times cannot be in any respect variable. And this immutability being constant from eternity, implies duration without succession, and is wholly a mystery and seeming inconsistency. It seems as much as to say, an infinitely great or long duration all at once, or all in a moment; which seems to be saying, an infinitely great in an infinitely little; or an infinitely long line in a point without any length.

§ 17. Infinite Understanding, which implies an understanding of all things past, present, and future; and of all

truth and all reason, and argument, implies infinite thought and reason. But, how this can be absolutely without mutation, or succession of acts, seems mysterious and absurd. We can conceive of no such thing as thinking, without successive acting of the mind about ideas. Perfect knowledge of all things, even of all the things of external sense, without any sensation, or any reception of ideas from without, is an inconceivable mystery. Infinite Knowledge, implies a perfect comprehensive view of a whole future eternity; which seems utterly impossible. For, how can there be any reaching of the whole of this, to comprehend it, without reaching to the utmost limits of it? But this cannot be, where there is no such thing as utmost limits. And again, if God perfectly views an eternal succession or chain of events, then he perfectly sees every individual part of that chain, and there is no one link of it hid from his sight. And yet there is no one link that has not innumerable links beyond it; from which it would seem to follow, that there is a link beyond all the links that he sees, and consequently, that there is one link, yea, innumerable links, that he sees not; inasmuch as there are innumerable links beyond every one that he sees. And many other such seeming contradictions might be mentioned, which attend the supposition of God's omniscience.

If there be an absolute immutability in God, then there never arises any new act in God, or new exertion of himself; and yet there arise new effects: which seems an utter inconsistency. And so, innumerable other such like mysteries and paradoxes are involved in the notion of an infinite and eternal intelligent Being. Insomuch, that, if there had never been any *revelation*, by which God had made known himself by his word to mankind; the most speculative persons would, without doubt, have for ever been exceedingly at a loss concerning the nature of the Supreme Being and First Cause of the universe. And, that some of the ancient philosophers and wiser heathens had so good notions of God as they had, seems to be much more owing to tradition, which originated from divine revelation, than from their own invention; though human reason served to keep those traditions alive in the world, and led the more considerate to embrace and retain the imperfect traditions which were to be found in any parts remaining, as they appeared, when once suggested and delivered, agreeable to reason.

§ 18. If a revelation be made of the principal scheme of the Supreme and infinitely Wise Ruler, respecting his moral

kingdom, wherein his all-sufficient wisdom is displayed, in the case of its greatest trial; ordering and regulating the said moral kingdom to its great ends, when in the most difficult circumstances; extricating it out of the most extreme calamities, in which it had been involved by the malice and subtilty of the chief and most crafty of all God's enemies, should we expect *no* mysteries? If it be the principal of all the effects of the wisdom of Him, the depth of whose wisdom is unsearchable and absolutely infinite; his deepest scheme, by which mainly the grand design of the universal, incomprehensibly complicated system of all his operations, and the infinite series of his administrations, is most happily, completely and gloriously attained; the scheme in which God's wisdom is mainly exercised and displayed: it may reasonably be expected, that such a revelation will contain *many* mysteries.

We see that to be the case, even as to many works of human wisdom and art. They appear strange, paradoxical, and incomprehensible, by those that are vastly inferior in sagacity, or are entirely destitute of that skill or art. How are many of the effects of human art attended with many things that appear strange and altogether incomprehensible by children, and many others seeming to be beyond and against nature; and, in many cases, the effect produced not only seems to be beyond the power of any visible means, but inconsistent with it, being an effect contrary to what would be expected: the means seem inconsistent with the end.

§ 19. If God reveal the exact truth in those things which, in the language of the heathen sages, are matters of philosophy, especially, things concerning the nature of the Deity, and the nature of man as related to the Deity, &c. it may most reasonably be expected, that such a revelation should contain many mysteries and paradoxes, considering how many mysteries the doctrines of the greatest and best philosophers, in all ages, concerning these things, have contained; or, at least, how very mysterious, and seemingly repugnant they are to the reason of the vulgar, and persons of less understanding; and considering how mysterious the principles of philosophers, even concerning matters far inferior to these, would have appeared in any former age, if they had been revealed to be true, which however are now received as the most undoubted truths.

If God gives mankind his word in a large book, consisting of a vast variety of parts, many books, histories, prophecies,

prayers, songs, parables, proverbs, doctrines, promises, sermons, epistles, and discourses of very many kinds, all connected together, all united in one grand drift and design; and one part having a various and manifold respect to others; so as to become one great work of God, and one grand system; as is the system of the universe, with its vast variety of parts, connected in one grand work of God: It may well be expected that there should be mysteries, things incomprehensible and exceeding difficult to our understanding; analogous to the mysteries that are found in all the other works of God, as the works of creation and providence; and particularly such as are analogous to the mysteries that are observable in the system of the natural world, and the frame of man's own nature.

§ 20. If it be still objected, that it is peculiarly unreasonable that mysteries should be supposed in a revelation given to mankind; because, if there be such a revelation, the direct and principal design of it must be, to teach mankind, and to inform their understandings, which is inconsistent with its delivering things to man which he cannot understand; and which do not inform but only puzzle and confound his understanding: I answer,

1st, Men are capable of understanding as much as is pretended to be revealed; though they cannot understand all that *belongs* to the things revealed. For instance, God may reveal, that there are Three who have the same nature of the Deity, whom it is most proper for us to look upon as Three Persons; though the particular *manner* of their distinction, or how they differ, may not be revealed. He may reveal that the Godhead was united to man, so as to be properly looked upon as the same person; and yet not reveal *how* it was effected.

2d, No allowance is made in the objection, for what may be understood of the word of God in future ages, which is not now understood. And it is to be considered, that divine revelation is not given only for the present or past ages.

3d, The seeming force of this objection, lies wholly in this, that we must suppose whatever God does, tends to answer the end for which he does it; but that those parts of a revelation which *we* cannot understand, do not answer the end, inasmuch as informing *our* understandings is the very end of a revelation, if there be any such thing.

§ 21. But this objection is no other, than just equivalent to an objection which may be made against many parts of the *creation*, particularly of this lower world. It is apparent, the most direct and principal end of this lower world was, to be for the habitation, use, and benefit of mankind, the head of this lower world. But there are some parts of it that seem to be of no use to man, but are rather inconvenient and prejudicial to him; as, the innumerable stones and rocks that overspread so great a part of the earth, which, as to any thing known, are altogether useless, and oftentimes are rather an inconvenience than benefit.

Thus, it is reasonable to expect, that, in such a revelation, there should be many things plain and easy to be understood; and that the revelation should be most intelligible, wherein it is most necessary for us to understand it, in order to our guidance and direction in the way to our happiness; but that there should also be many incomprehensible mysteries in it, many things understood in part, but yet that room should be left for vast improvement in the knowledge of them, to the end of the world. It is reasonable to expect, that the case should actually be the same as concerning the works of nature; that many things which were formerly great and insuperable difficulties, unintelligible mysteries, should now, by further study and improvement, be well cleared up, and cease longer to remain difficulties; and that other difficulties should be considerably diminished, though not yet fully cleared up.

It may be expected that, as in the system of nature so in the system of revelation, there should be many parts whose use is but little understood, and many that should seem wholly useless, yea, and some that should seem rather to do hurt than good. I might further observe, that if we have a revelation given in ancient languages, used among a people whose customs and phraseology are but very imperfectly understood, many difficulties will arise from hence. And, in a very concise history, in which only some particular facts and circumstances that concern the special purpose of that revelation, are mentioned—and innumerable others are omitted that would be proper to be mentioned, if the main design were to give a full, clear, connected, continued history of such a people, or such affairs as the history mentions—it is no wonder that many doubts and difficulties arise.

§ 22. Tindal's main argument against the need of any

revelation, is, that the *law of nature is absolutely perfect*. But how weak and impertinent is this arguing, that because the *law of nature* (which is no other than natural rectitude and obligation) is perfect, therefore the *light of nature* is sufficient. To say, that the law of nature is perfect, yea, absolutely perfect, is no more than to say, that what is naturally fit and right in itself, is indeed right; and that what is in itself, or in its own nature, perfectly and absolutely right, is absolutely right. But this is an empty, insipid kind of doctrine. It is an idle way of spending time, ink and paper, to spend them in proving, that what is in its own nature perfectly true, is perfectly true; and what is in its nature perfectly good, is perfectly good; or that what is, is, and is as it is. But this is all that can be meant by the law of nature being perfect.

And how far is this from having any reference to that question, whether we have by mere nature, without instruction, all that light and advantage that we need, clearly and fully to know what is right, and all that is needful for us to be and to do, in our circumstances as sinners, &c. in order to the forgiveness of sin, the favour of God, and our own happiness? What, according to the nature of things, is fittest and best, may be most perfect; and yet our natural knowledge of this, may be most imperfect.

If Tindal, or any other Deist, would assert, and urge it upon mankind as an assertion that they ought to believe, that the light of nature is so sufficient to teach all mankind what they *ought*, or in any respect *need* to be, and to believe and practise for their good, that any additional instruction is needless and useless: then; all instruction in families and schools is needless and useless; all instruction of parents, tutors, and philosophers; all that has been said to promote any such knowledge as tends to make men good and happy by word of mouth, or by writing and books; all that is written by ancient and modern philosophers and learned men. And then, also, all the pains the Deists take in talking and writing to enlighten mankind, is wholly needless and vain.

§ 23. When it is asserted that the light of nature, or the means and advantages which all mankind have by pure nature, to know the way of their duty and happiness, are absolutely sufficient, without any additional means and advantages; one of these two things must be meant by it, if it has any meaning: either that they are sufficient in order to a mere possibility of

obtaining all needful and useful knowledge in these important concerns; or that these natural means have a sufficient tendency actually to reach the effect, either universally, or generally, or at least in a prevailing degree, according as the state of mankind may be.

If the former of these be meant, viz. that the means of understanding these things, which all mankind have by mere nature, is sufficient, in order to a bare possibility of obtaining this knowledge; even that, should it be allowed, will not at all prove, that farther light is not extremely needed by mankind. A bare *possibility* may be; and yet there may be no tendency or *probability* that ever the effect (however necessary, and however dreadful the consequence of its failing) will be reached, in one single instance, in the whole world of mankind, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, though it should stand millions of ages.

But if by the sufficiency of these natural means be meant, a *sufficiency of tendency* actually to reach the effect—either universally, or in a prevailing degree, considering all things belonging to the state and circumstances of mankind—it is the very same thing as to say, that it *actually* does obtain the effect. For, if the tendency, all things considered, be sufficient actually to obtain the effect, doubtless it does actually obtain it. For, what should hinder a cause from actually obtaining the effect that it has a sufficient tendency to obtain, all things considered? So that here, what we have to inquire, is, whether that effect be actually obtained in the world? whether the world of mankind be actually brought to all necessary or very important knowledge of these things, merely by the means they have by nature? History, observation, and experience, are the things which must determine the question.

§ 24. In order the more clearly to judge of this matter, of the sufficiency of the light of nature to know what is necessary to be known of religion in order to man's happiness, we must consider what are the things that must be known in order to this; which are these two: *1st*, The religion of nature, or the religion proper and needful, considering the state and relations we stand in as creatures: *2d*, The religion of a sinner, or the religion and duties proper and necessary for us, considering our state as depraved and guilty creatures, having incurred the displeasure of our Creator.

As to the former, it is manifest from *fact*, that nature alone is not sufficient for the discovery of the religion of nature, in the *latter* sense of sufficiency : That is, no means we have by mere nature, without instruction, bring men to the knowledge of the nature of God, and our natural relation to, and dependence on him, and the consequent relations we stand in to our fellow-creatures, and the duties becoming these relations, sufficient actually to reach the effect, either universally, or generally, or in any prevailing degree. No; nor does it appear to have proved sufficient, so much as in a single instance. A sufficiency to see the reasonableness of these things, when pointed out, is not the same thing as a sufficiency to find them out. None but either mere dunces, or those who are incorrigibly wilful, will deny that there is a vast difference.

And as to the latter, viz. the religion of a *sinner*, or the duties proper and necessary for us as depraved, guilty, and offending creatures ; it is most evident, the light of nature cannot be sufficient for our information, by any means, or in any sense whatsoever. No, nor is the law of nature sufficient either to prescribe or establish this religion. The light of nature is, in no sense whatsoever, sufficient to discover this religion. It has no sufficient tendency to it; nor, indeed, any tendency at all to discover it to any one single person in any age. And it not only has no tendency to the obtaining of this knowledge, by mere natural means, but it affords no *possibility* of it.—Not only is the *light* of nature insufficient to discover this religion, but the *law* of nature is not sufficient to establish it, or to give any room for it.

CHAP. VIII.

On the medium of moral government—particularly conversation.

§ 1. By *conversation*, I mean intelligent beings expressing their minds one to another, in words, or other signs intentionally directed to us for our notice, whose immediate and main design is to be significations of the mind of him who gives them. Those signs are evidences distinguished from works done by any, from which we may argue their minds. The first and most immediate design of the work is something

else than a mere signification to us of the mind of the efficient. Thus, I distinguish God's communicating his mind to us by word or conversation, from his giving us opportunity to learn it by philosophical reasoning; or, by God's works which we observe in the natural world.

§ 2. There is a great difference between God's *moral* government of his creatures, that have understanding and will, and his general government of providential disposal.—The nature, design, and ends of the latter, by no means require that it should be declared and made visible by a revelation of the methods, rules, particular views, designs, and ends of it: these are secret things that belong to God; in which men's understandings and wills are noway concerned. There is no application to these faculties in it; nor are these faculties any otherwise concerned, than the qualities or properties of inanimate and senseless things.

But it is quite otherwise with respect to God's moral government of a kingdom or society of intelligent and willing creatures; to which society he is united as its head, ruling for its good. The nature of that requires, that it should be declared, open and visible. How can any moral government be properly and sufficiently established and maintained in a kingdom of intelligent agents, consisting in exhibiting, prescribing, and enforcing methods, rules, and ends of their own intelligent voluntary actions, without declaring, and particularly promulgating to their understandings, those methods, rules, and enforcements? The moral government of a society, in the very nature of it, implies, and consists in, an application to their understandings, in directing the intelligent will, and in enforcing the direction by the declaration made.

§ 3. It is needful, in order to a proper moral government, that the ruler should enforce the rules of the society, by threatening just punishments, and promising the most suitable and wise rewards. But, without word or voluntary declaration; there is no threatening or promising in the case; in a proper sense. To leave the subject to find out what reward would be wise, if there appear in the state of things room for every subject to guess at it in some degree, would be a different thing from *promising* it. And to leave men to their own reason, to find out what would be a just, deserved, and, all things considered, a wise punishment, though we should suppose

some sufficiency in every one's reason for this, would be a different thing from *threatening* of it.

It is needful in a moral kingdom, not in a ruined and deserted state—the union between the head and members remaining—that there should be conversation between the governors and governed. It is requisite that the former should have intercourse with the latter in a way agreeable to their nature; that is, by way of *voluntary signification* of their mind to the governed, as the governed signify their minds voluntarily one to another. There should be something equivalent to conversation between the rulers and ruled; and thus the rulers should make themselves visible. The designs and ends of government should be made known; it should be visible what is aimed at, and what grand ends or events are in view, and the mind of the rulers should be declared as to the rules, measures, and methods, to be observed by the society. If the rulers are sovereign, absolute disposers, it is necessary their will should be particularly declared, as to the good and evil consequence of obedience or disobedience, which they intend as moral enforcements of the rules and laws, to persuade the will to a compliance. For they can reach the will, or affect it at all, no farther than they are made known.—It is requisite something should be known, particularly, of the nature, weight, and degree of the rewards and punishments, and of their time, place and duration.

§ 4. Thus, it is requisite that it should be declared what is the end for which God has made us, and made the world; supports it, provides for it, and orders its events. For what end mankind are made in particular; what is intended to be their main employment; what they should chiefly aim at in what they do in the world: How far God, the Creator, is man's end; and what man is to aim at with respect to God, who stands in no need of us, and cannot be in the least dependent on us: How far, and in what respect, we are to make God our highest end; and how we are to make ourselves, or our fellow-creatures, our end: What benefits man will have by complying with his end; what evils he shall be subject to by refusing, or failing so to comply, in a greater or lesser degree. If we have offended, and deserved punishment, it must be known on what terms (if it all) we may be forgiven and restored to favour; and what benefits we shall receive, if we are reconciled.

It is apparent, that there would be no hope that these things would ever be determined among mankind, in their

present darkness and disadvantages, without a revelation. Without a revelation—now extant, or once extant, having some remaining influence by tradition—men would undoubtedly for ever to be at a loss, what God expects from us, and what we may expect from him; what we are to depend upon as to our concern with God, and what ground we are to go upon in our conduct and proceedings that relate to him; what end we are to aim at; what rule we are to be directed by; and what good, and what harm, is to be expected from a right or wrong conduct. Yea, without a revelation, men would be greatly at a loss concerning God; what he is; what manner of Being; whether properly intelligent and willing; a Being that has will and design, maintaining a proper, intelligent, voluntary dominion over the world. Notions of the first Being, like those of Hobbes and Spinoza, would prevail. Especially would they be at a loss concerning those perfections of God, which he exercises as a moral governor. For we find that some of the Deists, though they, from revelation, have been taught these; yet, having cast off revelation, apparently doubt of them all. Lord Bolingbroke, in particular, insists that we have no evidence of them.

§ 5. And though, with regard to many, when they have a revelation fully setting forth the perfections of God—giving a rational account of them, and pointing forth their consistence—their reason may rest satisfied in them; this is no evidence that it is not exceeding needful that God should tell us of them. It is very needful that God should declare to mankind what manner of Being he is. For, though reason may be sufficient to confirm such a declaration after it is given, and enable us to see its consistence, harmony, and rationality, in many respects; yet reason may be utterly insufficient first to discover these things.

Yea, notwithstanding the clear and infinitely abundant evidences of his *being*, we need that God should tell us that there is a great Being, who *understands*, who *wills*, and who has made and governs the world. It is of unspeakable advantage, as to the *knowledge* of this, that God has told us of it; and there is much reason to think, that the notion mankind in general have entertained in all ages concerning a Deity, has been very much originally owing to revelation.

On the supposition, that God has a moral kingdom in the world, that he is the head of a moral society, consisting either of some part of mankind, or of the whole; in what

darkness must the affairs of this moral kingdom be carried on, without a communication between the head and the body; the ruler never making himself known to the society by any word, or other equivalent expression whatsoever, either by himself, or by any mediators, or messengers?

§ 6. So far as we see, all moral agents are *conversible* agents. It seems to be so agreeable to the nature of moral agents, and their state in the universal system, that we observe none without it; and there are no beings that have even the semblance of intelligence and will, but possess the faculty of conversation; as in all kinds of birds, beasts, and even insects. So far as there is any appearance of something like a mind, so far they give *significations* of their minds one to another, in something like conversation among rational creatures. And, as we rise higher in the scale of beings, we do not see that an increase of perfection diminishes the need or propriety of communication and intercourse of this kind, but augments it. And accordingly, we see most of it among the most perfect beings. So we see conversation by voluntary immediate significations of each other's minds, more fully, properly, and variously, between mankind, than any other animals here below. And if there are creatures superior to mankind united in society, doubtless still voluntary converse is more full and perfect.

Especially do we find conversation proper and requisite between intelligent creatures concerning *moral* affairs, which are most important; affairs wherein especially moral agents are concerned, as joined in society, and having union and communion one with another. As to other concerns that are merely personal and natural, wherein we are concerned more separately, and by ourselves, and not as members of society, in them there is not equal need of conversation.

§ 7. Moral agents are *social* agents; affairs of morality are affairs of society. It is concerning moral agents as united in society in a commonwealth or kingdom, that we have been speaking. Particular moral agents so united, need conversation. The affairs of their social union cannot well be maintained without conversation. And if so, what reason can be given, why there should be no need of conversation with the head of the society? The head of the society, so far as it is united with it on a *moral* ground, is a social head. The head belongs to the society, as the natural head belongs to the body.

And the union of the members with the head is greater, stricter, and more important, than one with another. And if their union with other members of the society require conversation, much more their greater union with the head. By all that we see and experience, the *moral* world, and the *conversible* world, are the same thing; and it never was intended, that the affairs of society, in any that are united in society among intelligent creatures, should be upheld and carried on without conversation.

There is no more reason to deny God any conversation with his moral kingdom, in giving laws, and enforcing them with promises and threatenings, than to deny him any conversation with them in another world, when judging them. But, can any that believe a future state, rationally imagine, that when men go into another world to be judged by their Supreme Governor, nothing will pass or be effected through the immediate interposition of the Judge, but all things be left wholly to go on according to laws of nature established from the beginning of the world: and that souls pass into another state by a law of nature, as a stone, when shaken off from a building, falls down by gravity, without any miraculous signification from God? But there is as much reason to suppose this, as to deny any miraculous interposition in giving and establishing the laws of the moral society. If judgment and execution by law, be by immediate interposition and declaration, why not legislation?

§ 8. The *ground* of moral behaviour, and all moral government and regulation, is society, or mutual intercourse and social regards. The special medium of union and communication of the members of the society, and the being of society as such, is conversation; and the well-being and happiness of society is friendship. It is the highest happiness of all moral agents; but friendship, above all other things that belong to society, requires conversation. It is what friendship most naturally and directly desires. By conversation, not only is friendship maintained and nourished, but the felicity of friendship is tasted and enjoyed. The happiness of God's moral kingdom consists, in an inferior degree, in the members' enjoyment of each other's friendship; but infinitely more in the enjoyment of their head. Therefore, here especially, and above all, is conversation requisite.

§ 9. Conversation between God and mankind in this world, is maintained by God's *word* on his part, and by *prayer*

on ours. By the former, he speaks and expresses his mind to us; by the latter, we speak and express our minds to him. Sincere friendship towards God, in all who believe him to be properly an intelligent, willing Being, does most apparently, directly, and strongly, incline to prayer; and it no less disposes the heart strongly to desire to have our infinitely glorious and gracious Friend expressing his mind to us by his word, that we may know it. The same light which has directed the nations of the world in general to prayer, has directed them to suppose, that God, or the gods, have revealed themselves to men. And we see, that the same infidelity that disposes men to deny any divine revelation, disposes them to reject as absurd the duty of prayer.

§ 10. If God's moral kingdom, or the society of his friends and willing subjects, shall be in a most happy state in another world—in the most complete friendship, and in perfect union with God their Head, as some of the Deists pretend to believe—is it reasonable to suppose any other, than that they will fully enjoy the sweets of their friendship one with another, in the most perfect conversation, either by words, or some more perfect medium of expressing their minds? And shall they have, at the same time, no conversation at all with their glorious Head, the fountain of all the perfection and felicity of the society, in friendship with whom their happiness chiefly consists? That friendship, and the happiness they have in it, is begun in this world; and this is the state wherein they are trained up for that more perfect state: And shall they nevertheless live here wholly without any intercourse with God of this sort; though their union with him, as their moral Head, and their great Friend, begins here; and though their happiness, as consisting in friendship to him, and also the enjoyment of that subordinate happiness of holding a virtuous and holy conversation one with another, be begun here? The need of conversation in order properly to support and carry on the concerns of *society*, may well appear, by considering the need of it for answering all the purposes of *friendship*, which is one of the main concerns of *society*, in some respects the main social concern, and the end of all the rest.

Let us suppose, that some friend, above all others dear to us, in whose friendship consisted the main comfort of our life, should leave us in possession of something he had contrived and accomplished, some manifold complicated effect

that he had produced which we might have always in our view. Suppose also that this work should be a very great and manifold evidence of the excellencies of our friend's mind, of his great, fixed, and firm benevolence to us; and that he should withdraw for ever, and never have any conversation with us; that no word should ever pass, or any thing of that nature; and that no word should be left behind in writing, nor any word ever spoken left in the memory: would this sufficiently and completely answer the purposes of this great friendship, and satisfy its ends and desires, or be a proper support of this great end of society? I cannot but think, every sober, considerate person will at once determine, that it would be very far from it, for such reasons as these,—that it would not give us those views of things, pertaining to the support and enjoyment of friendship, suitable to the nature of intelligent, volitive, and conversible beings; not giving the direct and immediate view, nor at all tending, in so great a degree and so agreeable a manner to affect and impress the mind. And as, for these reasons, this alone would not answer the ends and purposes of society in this respect; so, for the same reasons, it would not answer other purposes of society.

§ 11. As we may suppose, that God will govern mankind, in that moral kingdom which he hath mercifully set up among them, in a manner agreeable to their nature; so, it is reasonable to suppose, that he would make his moral government, with respect to them, *visible*, not only in declaring the *general* ends, methods and rules of his government, but also by making known the chief of his more *particular* aims and designs. As, in human kingdoms, in order to the wisdom, righteousness and goodness of the administration being properly *visible*—so far as is requisite for encouraging and animating of the subject, and in order to the suitable convenience, satisfaction and benefit of the whole society of intelligent agents—it is needful, not only that the general end, viz. the public good, should be known, but also, the particular design of many of the principal parts of the administration, among which we may reckon the main negotiations, treaties and changes of affairs, the cause and end of wars engaged in, the ground of treaties of peace and commerce, the design of general revolutions in the state of the kingdom, &c. Otherwise the society is not governed in a manner becoming their rational and active nature; but affairs are carried on in

the dark, and the members have no opportunity to consent or concur, to approve or disapprove, to rejoice in the goodness, wisdom and benefit of the administration, and to pay proper regards to those in whose hands the government is, &c. These things are necessary for the establishment and confirmation of the government. God's moral government over his moral kingdom on earth, cannot, in such like respects, be carried on in a visible manner, and in a way suitable to our nature, without divine history and prophecy. Without divine history, we cannot properly see the grounds and foundation of divine administrations, the first formation or erection of God's moral kingdom, the nature and manner of the main revolutions to which it has been subject, which are the ground of future designs, and to which future events and intended revolutions have a relation. It is also necessary, that those past events should be known, in order that the reason, wisdom and benefit of the present state of the kingdom, and of God's present dispensations towards it, may be known. And prophecy is needful to reveal the future designs and aims of government, and what good things are to be expected.

These things are necessary, in order to the proper establishment, health and prosperity, of God's moral, intelligent kingdom. Without them, the government of an infinitely wise and good Head, is not sensible. There is no opportunity to see the effects and success of the administration. There is no opportunity to find it by experience. Neither the designs of government, nor the accomplishment of those designs, are sensible; and the government itself, with respect to fact, is not made visible.

§ 12. If it be said, that reason, and the light of nature, without revelation, are sufficient to shew us, that the end of God's government, in his moral kingdom, must be, to promote these two things among mankind, viz. their virtue, and their happiness:

In reply, I would ask, What satisfaction can men without revelation have, with respect to the design, wisdom and success of God's government, as to these ends, when wickedness so generally prevails and reigns, through all ages hitherto, in the far greater part of the world; and the world, at all times, is so full of calamities, miseries and death, having no prophecies of a better state of things in which all is to issue at last, in the latter ages of the world; or assuring us that all these miserable changes and great confusion are guided

by Infinite Wisdom to that great final issue, and without any revelation of a future state of happiness to the city of God in another world ?

§ 13. *Object.* God does maintain a moral government over all mankind : but we see, in fact, that many are not governed by revelation since the greater part of the world have been destitute of divine revelation : which shews that God does not look upon conversation as necessary in order to his moral government of mankind, as God judges for himself, and acts according to his own judgment.

Ans. 1. What I have been speaking of, is God's moral government over a society of moral agents, which are his kingdom, or a society that have God for their King, united to them as the Head of the society ; as it is with earthly kings with respect to their own kingdoms, where the union between king and subjects is not broken and dissolved ; and not of a society or country of rebels, who have forsaken their lawful sovereign, withdrawn themselves from subjection to him, and cast off his government : though they may still be under the king's power, and moral dominion, in some sense, as he may have it in his power and design, to conquer, subdue, judge and punish them for their rebellion. But yet the sense in which such a nation is under the moral government of this king, and may be said to be his kingdom or people, is surely extremely diverse from that of a kingdom remaining in union with their king. In the case of a people broken off from their king, the maintaining of intercourse by conversation is in no wise in like manner requisite. The reasons for such intercourse, which take place in the other case, do not take place in this.

In that case, society ceases ; i. e. that union ceases between God and man, by which they should be of one society. And where society ceases, there the argument for conversation ceases. If a particular member of the society were wholly cut off, and ceases to be of the society—the union being entirely broken—the argument for conversation, the great medium of social concerns, ceases. So, if the body be cut off from the head, or be entirely disunited from it, intercourse ceases. Moral government in a society is a *social* affair ; wherein consists the intercourse between superior and inferior constituents, between that which is original, and that which is dependent, directing and directed in the society. It is proper, in this case, that the rebel people should have

sufficient means of knowing the end of their rebellion, and that it is their duty to be subject to their king, to seek reconciliation with him, and to inquire after his will. But while they remain obstinate in their rebellion, and the king has not received them into favour, the state of things does not require, that he should particularly declare his intentions with respect to them, or should open to them the designs and methods of his administration. It is not necessary that he should publish among *them* the way and terms of reconciliation; make revelations of his goodness and wisdom, and the great benefits of his government; converse with them as their friend, and so open the way for their being happy in so great a friend; or that he should so particularly and immediately publish among them, particular statutes and rules for their good, as a society of moral agents, &c. Conversation, in this sense, when there is an utter breach of the union, is not to be expected, nor is it requisite, though judging and condemning may.

Ans. 2. So far as the union between God and the Heathen world has not been utterly broken; so far they have not been left utterly destitute of all benefit of divine revelation. They are not so entirely and absolutely cast off, but that there is a possibility of their being reconciled; and God has so ordered the case, that there is an equal possibility of their receiving the benefit of divine revelation.

If the Heathen world, or any parts of it, have not only enjoyed a mere possibility of being restored to favour, but have had some advantages for it; so, a great part, yea, mostly the greater part of the Heathen world, have not been left merely to the light of nature. They have had many things, especially in the times of the Old Testament, that were delivered to mankind in the primitive ages of the world by revelation, handed down from their ancestors by tradition; and many things borrowed from the Jews. And, during those ages, by many wonderful dispensations towards the Jews—wherein God did, in a most public and striking manner, display himself, and shew his hand—the world had, from time to time, notices sufficient to convince them, that there was a divine revelation extant, and sufficient to induce them to seek after it. And things sufficient to make revelation public, to spread it abroad—to extend the fame of it and its effects to the utmost end of the earth, and to draw men's attention to it—have been vastly more and greater in later times, than in the primitive ages.

Ans. 3. The nations that are separated from the True

God, and live in an open and obstinate full rejection of him as their Supreme Moral Governor, reject all friendly intercourse while their state is such. They are open enemies; and, so far as God treats them as such, he does not exercise any friendly moral government over them. And they have light sufficient, without revelation, for any other exercise of moral government and intercourse, besides those that are friendly, viz. in judging and condemning them. They have light sufficient for that judgment and condemnation, of which they shall be the subjects. For their condemnation shall proceed no farther, than proportioned to their light. They shall be condemned for the violation of the law of nature and nations; and the degree of their condemnation shall be only answerable to the degree of the means and advantages they have had for information of the duties of this law, and of their obligations to perform them.

Ans. 4. What has appeared in those parts of the world which have been destitute of revelation, is so far from being any evidence that revelation is not necessary, that in those nations and ages which have been most destitute of revelation, the necessity of it has most evidently and remarkably appeared, by the extreme blindness and delusion which have prevailed and reigned, without any remedy, or any ability in those nations to extricate themselves from their darkness.

§ 14. I think, a little sober reflection on those opinions which appear among the deists, weighing them together with the nature of things, may convince us, that a general renunciation of divine revelation, after nations have enjoyed it, would soon bring those nations to be more absurd, brutish and monstrous in their notions and practices, than the heathens were before the gospel came among them. For, (1.) Those nations had many things among them derived originally from revelation, by tradition from their ancestors, the ancient founders of nations, or from the Jews, which led them to embrace many truths contained in the scripture; and they valued such tradition. It was not, in general, their humour to despise such an original of doctrines, or to contemn them because they had their first foundation in divine revelation, but they valued them the more highly on this account; and had no notion of setting them aside, in order to the drawing of every thing from the fountain of their own reason. By this means, they had a great deal more of truth in matters of religion and morality, than ever human reason would have discovered with-

out helps. But now, the humour of the deists is, to reject every thing that they have had from supposed revelation, or any tradition whatsoever, and to receive nothing but what they can clearly see, and demonstrate from the fountain of their own unassisted reason. (2.) The heathens, by tradition, received and believed many great truths, of vast importance, that were incomprehensible; and it was no objection with them against receiving them, that they were above their comprehension. But now, it is a maxim with the free-thinkers, that nothing is to be believed but what can be comprehended; and this leads them to reject all the principles of natural religion (as it is called) as well as revealed. For there is nothing pertaining to any doctrine of natural religion, not any perfection of God, no, nor his very existence from eternity, without many things attending it that are incomprehensible. (3.) The heathens of old, in their reasonings, did not proceed in that exceeding haughtiness and dependence on their own mere singular understanding, disdainng all dependence on teaching, as our deists do; which tends to lead one to reject almost all important truths, out of an affectation of thinking freely, independently, and singularly. Some of the heathens professed their great need of teaching and of *divine* teaching. (4.) The heathens did not proceed with that enmity against moral and divine truth, not having been so irritated by it. They were willing to pick up some scraps of this truth which came from revelation, which our deists reject all in the lump.

§ 15. If we suppose that God never speaks to, or converses at all with mankind, and has never, from the beginning of the world, said any thing to them, but has perfectly let them alone as to any voluntary, immediate, and direct signification of his mind to them, in any respect teaching, commanding, promising, threatening, counselling or answering them; such a notion, if established, would tend exceedingly to atheism. It would naturally tend to the supposition, that there is no Being that made and governs the world. And if it should nevertheless be supposed, that there is *some* Being who is, in some respect, the original of all other beings; yet, this notion would naturally lead to doubt of his being properly an intelligent, volitive Being; and to doubt of all duties to him implying intercourse, such as prayer, praise, or any address to him, external or internal, or any respect to him at all analogous to that which we exercise towards rulers or

friends, or any intelligent beings we here see and know; and so it would tend to overthrow every doctrine and duty of natural religion. Now, in this respect, deism has a tendency to a vastly greater degree of error and brutishness with regard to matters of religion and morality, than the ancient heathenism. For the heathens in general had no such notion, that the Deity never at all conversed with mankind in the ways above-mentioned; but received many traditions, rules, and laws, as supposing they came from God, or the gods, by revelation.

§ 16 Many of the freethinkers of late deceive themselves, through the ambiguity or equivocal use of the word *Reason*. They argue, that we must make our reason the highest rule by which to judge of all things, even of the doctrines of revelation; because reason is that by which we must judge of revelation itself. It is the rule on which our judgment of the truth of a revelation depends, and therefore undoubtedly must be that, by which particular doctrines of it must be judged: not considering that the word *reason* is here used in two senses. In the former, viz. in our judging of the divinity of a supposed revelation, the word means the *faculty* of reason taken in the whole extent of its exercise: In the latter, it is the *opinion* of our reason, or some particular opinions that have appeared rational to us. Now, there is a great difference between these two. It is true, the faculty of reason is that by which we are to judge of every thing, as it is the eye by which we see all truth. And, after we have received revelation, still, by the faculty of reason, we receive the particular doctrines of revelation, yea, even those that are most difficult to our comprehension. For, by the faculty of reason we determine this principle, that God knows better than us; and whatever God declares is true. But this is an exceedingly different thing from making an *opinion*, which we first establish without revelation, by reason only, as our rule to judge of particular doctrines which revelation declares. It may be illustrated by this: If there be a man with whom we have the most thorough acquaintance, and have long known to be a person of the soundest judgment and greatest integrity, who goes a journey or voyage to a place where we never were; and, when he returns, gives an account of some strange phænomena or occurrences that he was an eye-witness of there, which we should not have otherwise believed; but we believe them now to be true, because we rely on his

testimony. Here, it would be ridiculous for a man to say, that it is unreasonable to believe him, because what he says is not agreeable to reason, (meaning, by *reason*, that particular *opinion* we should have had, independent on his testimony); and urging that *reason* must be our highest rule, and not his testimony, because it is by our *reason* that we judge of the testimony, and the credibility of the man that testifies; meaning, in this case, the *faculty* of reason. This would be as unreasonable, as for a man to say, that he never will rely on any representation made by the best microscope or telescope that is different from the representation which he has by his naked eye; because his eye is the rule by which he sees even the optic glass itself, and by which he judges whether it be regularly made, tending to give a true representation of objects; urging that his eye must be the highest rule for him to determine by, because it is by the eye he determines the goodness and sufficiency of the glass itself; and therefore he will credit no representation made by the glass, wherein the glass differs from his eye; and so will not believe that the blood consists partly of red particles, and partly of a limpid liquor, because it appears all red to the naked eye: Not considering the different sense in which he uses the word *eye*. In the former case, viz. with respect to judging of the goodness of the optic glass, he means the sense of seeing, or the organ of sight. In the latter, when he says he will not believe the representation of the glass, wherein it differs from his eye, because his *eye* is the highest rule; by the *eye*, he means the particular *representation* he has by his eye, separately, and without the glass.

§ 17 Again: They blunder exceedingly, through not making a distinction between *reason* and a *rule of reason*. They say, that reason is our highest rule by which to judge of all things, and therefore they must judge of the doctrines of revelation by it; whereas, they seem not to consider what they mean by reason being the highest rule. It is true, our reason or understanding is the only *judging faculty* by which we determine truth and falsehood. But it is not properly our highest *rule of judging* of truth and falsehood, nor any rule at all. The *judge*, and the *rule* by which he judges, are diverse. A *power* of discerning truth, and a *rule* to regulate and determine the use of that power, are quite different things. The *rule* may be divine revelation, especially in

matters of religion. As it is with the faculty or organ of sight, the organ is not properly the *highest* means, but the only *immediate* means we have of discerning the objects of sight. But if men were talking of *rules* how to use their eyes to the best advantage, so as to see most certainly and clearly—to see the most distant, or the minutest objects, so as to have the most certain and full information—it would be ridiculous for any one to say that his *eye* was the highest *rule* to regulate his sight.

§ 18. Sometimes, by the word *reason*, is intended the same as *argument* or *evidence*, which the faculty of reason makes use of in judging of truth: As when we say, we should believe nothing without, or contrary to *reason*; that is, we should not give the assent of our judgments without, or against *evidence*, or something that appears which argues the thing to be true. But if this be meant by them who assert *reason* to be a rule superior to revelation, it is absurd in them thus to speak of *reason* as contradistinguished from revelation. To say, that argument or evidence is a higher rule than revelation is to make evidence and divine revelation entirely distinct; implying, that divine revelation is not of the nature of evidence or argument. They ought to explain themselves, who assert, that *evidence* is superior to the evidence we have by divine revelation. It is true, divine testimony is not the same thing as argument or evidence in general; because it is a particular sort of evidence. There are other particular sorts of evidence; and persons might speak as intelligibly, if they single out any other kind of evidence, and assert, that *reason* or evidence was superior to that sort of evidence. As, for instance, one sort of evidence is human testimony of credible eye-witnesses; another is credible history; another is memory; another is present experience; another is geometrical mensuration; another is arithmetical calculation; another is strict metaphysical distinction and comparison. Now, would it not be an improper and unintelligible way of speaking, to ask, whether *evidence* was not above *experience*? or, whether *argument* was not above *mensuration* or *calculation*? If they who plead, that *reason* is a rule to judge of truth superior to revelation, mean by *reason*, that evidence which is worthy to influence the faculty of reason; it seems not to be considered by them, that such evidence, when spoken of in general, comprehends divine testimony, as well as other sorts of evidence; unless they would entirely set aside divine

revelation, as carrying in it no evidence at all. If this be their meaning, they are deceitful; for this is not what they pretend: since it would entirely change the point in dispute, and alter the whole controversy.

Or if, when they say reason is a higher rule than revelation, they mean reason, *exclusive* of revelation, or that such arguments of truth as we have without revelation, is better than divine testimony; that is as much as to say, all other arguments are better than divine testimony. For reason or argument, without divine testimony, comprehends all other arguments that are without divine testimony: and then, this is as much as to say, that divine testimony is the very least and lowest of all possible arguments, that ever can occur to the mind of man, in any measure to influence his judgment; which meaning they will hardly own. On the whole, it is manifest, that, let us turn the expressions which way we will, all the boasted proof of their assertion is owing wholly to confusion, and an ambiguous use of terms; it is talking without ideas, and making sounds without fixing any distinct meaning.

§ 19. Here, if any, in disdain of such an imputation, shall say, "I see no necessity of supposing this assertion to be so unreasonable and unintelligible. By reason, we mean *that* evidence which is seen by reason simply considered; reason itself, without dependence on the dictates of another; viewing things as they are in themselves:" such an objector is mistaken, if he thinks he has got clear of the difficulty. All evidence whatsoever, even that by divine revelation, is included in his description of reason. It is by viewing things *as they are* in themselves, and judging by our *own* reason, and not by the reason of another, that we judge there is a divine revelation, and that we judge divine revelation must be agreeable to truth. Reason judges by viewing things as they are in themselves, not the less because it makes use of a *medium* of judgment: and when reason makes use of divine testimony as an evidence or medium of judgment, it judges as much by viewing things as they are in themselves, as when it makes use of any other medium of judgment; as, for instance, a measuring rod in judging of distances, a compass in judging of directions and courses, and figures and characters in calculating and determining numbers.

If any should say, that *reason*, in our inquiries after truth, is to be regarded as a rule superior to *experience*, this—according to what would be most naturally suggested to the

mind by such a saying, and might generally be supposed to be intended by it according to the more usual acceptation of words—would be a foolish assertion. For by the comparison which takes place in the proposition between *reason* and *experience*, reason would be understood in such a sense as that it might properly be set in opposition to experience, or taken in contradiction to it; and therefore the proposition must be understood thus, viz. That our highest rule is what our reason would suggest to us independent of experience, in the same things that are matters of experience. Or, what our reason would lead us to suppose *before* experience, is what we must regard as our highest rule, even in those matters that afterwards are tried *by* experience. Certainly, he that should proceed in this manner in his inquiries after truth, would not be thought wise by considerate persons.

§ 20. Yet it is really true, in some sense, that our reason is our highest rule; and that by which we are to try and judge of all things: even our experience and senses themselves must be tried by it. For we have no other faculty but our reason, by which we can determine of truth or falsehood, by any argument or medium whatsoever. Let the argument be testimony or experience, or what it will, we must judge of the goodness or strength of the argument by reason. And thus it is we actually determine, that *experience* is so good and sure a medium of proof. We consider the nature of it; and our reason soon shews us the necessary connection of this medium with truth. So we judge of the degree of dependence that is to be had on our senses by reason; by viewing the agreement of one sense with another, and by comparing, in innumerable instances, the agreement of the testimonies of the senses with other criteria of truth, and so rationally estimating the value of these testimonies.

But if this is what is meant by saying, that our reason is a surer rule than experience, it is an improper way of speaking, and an abuse of language. For, take reason thus; and so reason and experience are not properly set in contradiction, or put in comparison one with another; for the former includes the latter, as the genus includes the species, or as a whole includes the several particular sorts comprehended in that whole. For, judging by experience is one way of judging by reason; or rather, experience is one sort of argument which reason makes use of in judging. And to say that reason is a more sure rule than experience, is to say, that arguing

is a more sure rule than a particular way of arguing: or to say that argument (in general) is a more sure rule than that particular sort of argument, viz. experience. Or if, by Reason, is meant the *faculty of reason*, or that power or ability of the mind, whereby it can see the force of arguments; then such an assertion will appear still more nonsensical. For then, it is as much as to say, that the mind's *ability* to see the force of arguments, is a surer rule by which to judge of truth, than that particular argument, viz. experience; which is the same as to say, an ability to judge of arguments is a surer argument than that sort of argument, experience; or that a man's understanding is a better rule to understand by, than such a particular means or rule of understanding.

These observations concerning reason and experience, when these two are compared as rules by which to judge of truth, may be applied to reason and revelation, or divine testimony, when in like manner compared as distinct rules of truth. To insist, that mens own reason is a rule superior to divine revelation, under a pretence, that it is by reason that we must judge even of the authority of revelation; that all pretended revelations must be brought to the test of reason; and that reason is the judge whether they are authentic or not, &c. is as foolish as it would be to assert, for the like reasons, that man's own *reason* is a test of truth superior to *experience*. There is just the same fallacy in the arguments that are brought to support one and the other of these foolish assertions; and both are, for reasons equally forcible, very false, or very nonsensical.

§ 21. If the assertion of those who say, that men's own reason is a higher test of truth than divine revelation, has any sense in it, it must imply a comparison of *different sorts* of arguments or evidences of truth; and so the meaning of it must be, that those evidences of truth, which men find before they have the help of divine revelation, are a better criterion of truth, than any discovery they have by revelation. And their great argument to prove it, is this, that the faculty of reason, by which the mind is able to discern the force of truth, is the only faculty by which we are able to judge of the value and force of revelation itself. It is just such a sort of arguing, as if a person should go about to demonstrate, that a man could more certainly discover the form and various parts of the planets with the naked eye, than with a telescope; because the eye is that by which we see all visible things, yea,

by which we see and discern how to use and to judge of the goodness of telescopes themselves.

In the argument these men use, to prove that reason is a better test of truth than revelation, they wretchedly deceive themselves, by sliding off from the meaning which they give to the word *reason* in the premises, into another meaning of it exceedingly diverse in the conclusion. In the premises, wherein they assert, that reason is that by which we judge of all things, even of revelation itself, they mean either the *power* of discerning evidence; or the *act* of reasoning in general. The consequence they draw is, Therefore reason is a higher test of truth than revelation. Here, if they retained the same sense of the word as in the premises, the conclusion would be perfect nonsense. For then, the conclusion would be thus: The *power* or the *act* of discerning evidence, is a better *evidence* of truth, than divine revelation. But this is not what is intended to be understood. What is intended in the conclusion, is, that the evidence we have before we have revelation, or independently of it, is better and more certain than revelation itself.

§ 22. The outward provision which God makes through the ages of the world for the temporal benefit and comfort of mankind, in causing his sun to shine, and his rain to descend upon them, and in numberless other things, is a great argument that God was not determined to be their everlasting, irreconcilable enemy. And if God be reconcilable, it will follow, that he must make a revelation to mankind, to make known to them the terms and method of reconciliation. For God, who is offended, alone can tell us, on what terms he is willing to be reconciled; and how he will be at peace with us, and receive us to favour. And there surely is nothing, which can be pretended to be any revelation of this kind, if the holy Scripture is not.

§ 23. *Objection*: The scriptures are communicated to but few of mankind; so that, if a revelation of the method of reconciliation be necessary, a very great part of those who enjoy these external benefits and bounties of divine providence, still have no opportunity to obtain reconciliation with God, not having the benefit of that revelation. So that, notwithstanding these seeming testimonies of favour and placableness, it is all one to them, as if God was irreconcilable. For still, for want of the knowledge of the method of recon-

ciliation, it is all one to them, as though there were no such method, and as though no reconciliation were possible.—To this, I answer,

1st, The case of mankind is not just the same as if there were no such thing as reconciliation for mankind, or as though reconciliation were utterly impossible. For although the circumstances of a great part of the world be such, that their reconciliation be very improbable, yet it is not utterly impossible. There is a way of reconciliation, and it is publicly known in the world; and God has ever afforded opportunity to the generality of the habitable world, that if the minds of men had been as much engaged in the search of divine truth as they ought to have been, they might have felt after God, and found him; and might probably have come to an acquaintance with divine revelation.

2d, If there have been some parts of mankind, in some ages, for whom it was next to impossible that they should ever come to know that revelation which God has made, yet that hinders not the force of the argument for God's placableness to sinners, and the existence of a revealed method of reconciliation. The common favours of Providence may be a proof, that God intends favour to *some* among mankind, but yet be no proof, that he intends that *all* shall actually have the benefit of his favour. None will deny, but that those outward blessings of God's goodness were intended for the temporal benefit of *mankind*; and yet there are numbers who never actually receive any temporal benefit by many of them. None will doubt, but that God aimed at men's outward good, in providing grain, and grapes, and other fruits which the earth produces for man's subsistence and comfort in the world; as also the most useful animals. But yet a very great part of the world were for a long time wholly destitute of the most useful of these. All the innumerable nations that dwelt on this American side of the globe, were from age to age, till the Europeans came hither, wholly destitute of wheat, rye, barley, pease, wine, horses, neat cattle, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, and many other useful animals and fruits, which abounded in the other continent.

And it is probable, that some of those gifts of nature and providence, which are most useful to mankind, were what all men remained without the benefit of for many ages; as metals, wine, and many things used for food, clothing, and habitations. The loadstone, with regard to its polar direction, was doubtless intended for the use of mankind; but yet it is

but lately that any of them have had any benefit of it. Glass is a great gift of Providence, and yet but lately bestowed; and also some of the most useful medicines. And with regard to those things which are most universally useful, some have the benefit of them in vastly lesser degrees than others; as the heat of the sun, vegetation, &c.

§ 24. If it should be further objected, That, if God's true aim in these outward benefits of providence, which have the appearances of favour, be real favours to mankind, and so that the true happiness of mankind should be the consequence; one would think it should have the same effect in all places where those blessings are bestowed.

I answer, that it will not follow. God may grant things in all parts of the world, the main design of which may evidently be the benefit of mankind, and yet not have that effect in all places where they are given. As the main design of Him who orders the existence of rain in the world, is making the earth fruitful; yet it does not follow, that he designed this should actually be the effect in all parts of the globe where the rain falls. For it falls on the sea as well as the dry land, which is more than one half of the globe; but yet *there* it cannot answer this intention.

§ 25. Reason alone cannot certainly determine, that God will not insist on some satisfaction for injuries he receives. If we consider what have in fact been the general notions of mankind, we shall see cause to think, that the dictates of men's minds, who have been without revelation, have been contrariwise, viz, that the Deity will insist on some satisfaction. Repentance makes some satisfaction for many injuries that men are guilty of one towards another; because it bears some proportion to the degree of injury. But reason will not certainly determine, that it is proper for God to accept of repentance as some satisfaction for an offence, when that repentance is infinitely disproportionate to the heinousness of the offence, or the degree of injuriousness that is offered. And reason will not certainly determine, that the offence of forsaking and renouncing God in heart, and treating him with such indignity and contempt, as to set him below the meanest and vilest things, is not immensely greater, and more heinous, than any injury offered to men; and that therefore all our repentance and sorrow fall infinitely short of proportion in measure and degree. If it be said, that we may reasonably

conclude, and be fully satisfied in it, that a good God will forgive our sin on repentance ; I ask, what can be meant by repentance in the case of them that have no love nor true gratitude to God in their hearts, but who discover such an habitual disregard and contempt of God in their conduct, as to treat created things, of the lowest value, with greater respect than him ? If it be said, that thereby is meant being sorry for the offence ; I ask, whether that sorrow is worthy to be accepted as true repentance, that does not arise from any change of heart, or from a better mind, a mind more disposed to love God, and honour him, being now so changed as to have less disregard and contempt ? whether or not the sorrow which arises only from fear and self-love, with a heart still in rebellion against God, be such as we can be certain will be accepted ? If not, how shall a man, who at present has no better heart, but yet is greatly concerned for himself through fear, know how to obtain a better heart ? How does it appear, that he, if he tries only from fear and self-love, can make himself better, and make himself love God ? what proper tendency can there be in the heart to make itself better, until it sincerely repents of its present badness ? and how can the heart have sincerity of repentance of its present badness, until it begins to be better, and so begins to forsake its badness, by truly disapproving it, from a good disposition, or a better tendency arising in it ? If the disposition remain just the same, then no sincere disapprobation arises ; but the reigning disposition, instead of destroying, on the contrary approves and confirms itself. The heart can have no tendency to make itself better, until it begins to have a better tendency : for therein consists its badness, viz. having no good tendency or inclination. And to begin to have a good tendency, or, which is the same thing, to begin to have a sincere inclination to be better, is the same thing as to begin already to be better. So that it seems, that they that are now under the reigning power of an evil heart, can have no ability to help themselves, how sensible soever they may be of their misery, and concerned through fear and self-love to be delivered : but they need this from God, as part of their salvation, viz. that God should give them sincere repentance, as well as pardon and deliverance from the evil consequences of sin. And how shall they know, without revelation, that God will give sinners a better heart, to enable them truly to repent ; or in what way they can have any hope to obtain it of him ? And if men

could obtain some sincere repentance of their being wholly without that love of God that they ought to have ; yet how can reason determine, that God will forgive their sin, until they wholly forsake it ? or until their repentance is perfect ? until they relinquish all their sinful contempt, ingratitude and regardlessness of God ? or, which is the same thing, until they fully return to their duty, i. e. to that degree of love, honour, gratitude and devotedness to God, that is their duty ? If they have robbed God, who can certainly say that God will forgive them, until they restore all that they have robbed him of, and give him the whole that he claims by the most absolute right ? But where is any man that repents with such a perfect repentance ? and if there be ever any instances of it in this world, who will say, that it is in every man's power to obtain it ? or that there certainly are no lower terms of forgiveness ? and if there are, who can tell certainly where to set the bounds, and say precisely to what degree a man must repent ? How great must his sorrow be in proportion to his offences ? &c. Or, who can say, how long a man's day of probation shall last ? Will reason alone certainly determine, that if a man goes on for a long time presumptuously in his contempt, rebellion and affronts, presuming on God's goodness, depending that though he does thus abuse his grace as long as he pleases, yet if he repents at any time, God will forgive him, and receive him to favour, forgiving all his presumptuous aggravated rebellion, ingratitude and provocation, and will receive him into the arms of his love ? will reason alone fully satisfy the mind, that God stands ready to pardon and receive to favour such a sinner, after long continuance in such horrid presumption and most vile ingratitude ? Or, will reason fully determine for a certainty, that God will do it, if men thus presumptuously spend their youth, the best part of their lives, in obstinate and ungrateful wickedness, depending that God will stand ready to pardon afterwards ? and, in short, how can reason alone be sufficient to set the bounds, and say how long God will bear with and wait upon presumptuous sinners ? how many acts of such ingratitude and presumption he will be ready to forgive, and on what terms ? &c. I say, how can reason fix these limits, with any clear evidence that shall give the mind a fixed establishment and satisfaction ?

Therefore, if there be any such thing as the forgiveness and salvation of sinful men ; new relations of God to men, and concerns of God with men, and a new dependence of men on God, will arise, no less, probably much more important,

than those which are between God as man's Creator, and the author of his natural good. And as God must manifest his perfections in a new work of redemption or salvation, contrived and ordered by his infinite wisdom, and executed by his power—in a perfect consistence with his justice and holiness, and a greater manifestation of his goodness, than is made in his works as the author of nature—so these things must be the foundation of new regards to God, new duties, and a new religion, founded on those displays of his perfections in the work of salvation, and on the new relations God sustains towards men, and the new dependence of men on God, and new obligations laid on men in that work, which may be called *revealed religion*, different from that natural religion which is founded on the works of God, as the Creator and the Author of nature, and our concerns with God in that work; though not at all contrary to it.

The light of nature teaches that religion which is necessary to continue in the favour of the God that made us; but it cannot teach us that religion which is necessary to our being restored to the favour of God, after we have forfeited it.

CHAP. IX.

Mahometanism compared with Christianity—particularly with respect to their propagation.

§ 1. In what respect the propagation of Mahometanism is far from being parallel with the propagation of Christianity, will appear by these observations.—The *revolution* that was brought to pass in the world, by the propagation of Mahometanism, was not so great as that which happened by the propagation of Christianity; yea, in this respect, was by no means worthy to be compared to it. Consider the state the world was in before Christianity was propagated; how dark, ignorant, barbarous, and wicked; how strongly these things were established by long universal immemorial custom; how fixed in men's hearts; how established by all human authority, and power, and inclination; and how vast the alteration, when Christianity was introduced and established; how vast the overthrow of that which had been built up before, and stood from age to age; how great, how strong the building; how

absolute its destruction: and also, how great the building that was erected in its room; and of how different and opposite a nature from that which had stood on the same ground before.

§ 2 But as to the revolution brought to pass in the world by Mahometanism, it consisted either in the change made among the heathen—barbarous nations, which had their original from Arabia or Scythia—or among professing Christians. But, with respect to neither of these, was the revolution comparably so great as the other. As to the change made among those *Heathens*, they long had entertained some obscure notions of the true God; and many of the great truths of what is called natural religion, they had obtained by those glimmerings of the light of the gospel which had been diffused over great part of the world; even that part of it that had not fully embraced Christianity. But Mahometanism carried them very little farther in these things; and was an occasion of but small advance of light and knowledge. As to the change made among *Christians*, there was no advance at all made in knowledge, or in any thing that was good. And as to the change made among them as to religious customs, they had so degenerated before, and were become so superstitious, that the alteration was not very perceptible.

§ 3 The difference of the two revolutions was immensely great as to *goodness*. The change made in the world by the propagation of Christianity, was a great change indeed, with regard to light and knowledge. It was a change from great darkness to glorious and marvellous light. By the preaching of the gospel in the world, the day-spring from on high visited the earth, and the sun arose after a long night of the grossest darkness. But as to the change made in Christendom by the propagation of Mahometanism, there was no increase of light by it, but, on the contrary, it was evidently a change from light to darkness. It was a propagation of ignorance, and not of knowledge. As to the change made among the Heathens, as we observed before, those was but a small degree of increased light; and all that was added, was borrowed from Christianity. Any increase of knowledge that arose, proceeded only from Mahomet and his followers communicating what had before been communicated to them by Christian teaching. There can be no pretence of the least degree of addition in any thing, beyond what they had before received from

the gospel. And as to rules and precepts, examples, promises, or incitements to virtue of any kind, no addition at all was made. What alteration there existed, was only for the worse; the examples, histories, representations, and promises of the new Mahometan religion, only tended exceedingly to debase, debauch, and corrupt the minds of such as received it.

§ 4. The revolution that was occasioned by the propagation of Christianity, was an infinitely greater and more wonderful effect, if we consider the *opposition* that was overcome in bringing it to pass. Christianity was propagated against all the opposition that could be made by man's carnal dispositions, strengthened by inveterate general custom, principles, habits, and practice, prevailing like a mighty flood. Mahometanism was propagated, not in opposition to those inclinations, but by *complying* with them, and gratifying them, in examples, precepts, and promises, as STAFFERUS observes, (Theol. Polem. tom. iii. p. 292) speaking of Mahomet's laws, he says, "The law which he published, was, above all others, accommodated not only to the *opinions* of men, but also to the *depraved* nature, manners, and innate vices of those nations, among whom he propagated it; nor did it require much more than external exercises, which, to a carnal man, are much more easy to be performed, than those spiritual exercises which the sacred pages prescribe. He allowed of revenge for injuries; of discarding wives for the slightest causes; of the addition of wives to wives, which must have served only as so many new provocatives to lust. At the same time, he indulged himself in the greatest excess of promiscuous and base lasciviousness. He placed the true worship of God in such external ceremonies, as have no tendency to promote true piety. In fine, the whole of that religion which he instituted, was adapted to no other end, than the shedding of human blood."

§ 5. This religion is particularly adapted to the luxurious and *sensual* disposition. Christianity was extremely contrary to the most established and darling notions of the world; whereas Mahomet accommodated his doctrines to all such notions as were most pleasing at that time, among the Heathen, Arabians, Jews, and the several most prevailing sects of Christians; as STAFFERUS observes:

"Mahomet retained many of the opinions of the ancient Arabians; he mixed his doctrine with the fables of the Jews,

and retained many of the ceremonies of the other religions prevalent at that time. The religion of Mahomet favoured the prejudices of the Jews and of the Heathens; and was suited to the desires of the flesh, and to the allurements of the world. But the religion which Christ taught, did not, in the least instance, favour the depraved affections of men, and the indulgence of the flesh; but was diametrically opposed to them: nor was it suited to the prejudices of either Jews or Gentiles; but it was plainly contrary to the preconceived opinions of men. Whence the apostles, in preaching this religion, immediately opposed both the religion of the Jews and of the Gentiles." (Ibid. 340.) Christianity was propagated under the most violent, universal, and cruel persecution of all the powers of the world. Mahometanism was not so; it never made its way any where, in any remarkable degree, against persecution.

§ 6. The difference will appear great, if we consider the *time* when each of these were propagated. Christianity was propagated at a time when human learning and science was at its greatest height in the world. But Mahometanism was broached and propagated in ages of great darkness, after learning had exceedingly decayed, and was almost extinguished in the world.

§ 7. The difference will farther appear, if we consider the *places* from whence these religions were propagated.—Christianity was first begun in a place of great light, the greatest light with regard to religious knowledge then known, and in a very public part of the globe; whither resorted innumerable multitudes of people three times every year, from almost all parts of the then known world. And beside the vast resort of Jews and proselytes thither, it was a country that was at that time under the inspection and government of the Romans, where they had a governor, and other public officers, constantly residing. It was propagated especially from Jerusalem, the chief city in that country, and one of the greatest and most public cities in the world; and, indeed, all things considered, was next to Rome itself, nay, in some respects, even far beyond Rome. And the nations among whom it was first propagated after the Jews, were—not the more ignorant and barbarous, but—the most knowing and learned in the world; as particularly the Greeks and Romans. And the cities where it was very early received, and from

whence it was promulgated to other parts, were the greatest, most public, and polite; such as Antioch, Ephesus, Alexandria, Corinth, Athens, and Rome: And some of these were the greatest seats of learning and philosophy on earth.—Whereas, Mahometanism was broached in a dark corner of the earth, Arabia; and the people among whom it first gained strength, who sent out armies to propagate it to the rest of the world, were an ignorant and barbarous sort of people; such as the Saracens and Turks, who originated from Scythia.

§ 8. The difference appears in the *means* and *method* of propagation. Christianity was propagated by light, instruction and knowledge, reasoning and inquiry. These things were encouraged by the gospel; and by these means the gospel prevailed. But Mahometanism was not propagated by light and instruction, but by darkness; not by encouraging reasoning and search, but by discouraging knowledge and learning; by shutting out those things, and forbidding inquiry; and so, in short, by blinding the eyes of mankind.—It was propagated by the power of the sword also; by potent sultans, absolute tyrants, and mighty armies. Christianity was propagated by the weakest of men, unarmed with any thing but meekness, humility, love, miracles, clear evidence, most virtuous, holy, and amiable examples, and the power and favour of eminent virtue, joined with assured belief of the truth, with self-denial and suffering for truth and holiness. By such weapons as these was it propagated against the power, authority, wealth, and armour of the world: against the greatest potentates, most absolute and cruel tyrants, their most crafty counsels, and greatest strength, utmost rage and cruelty, and determined resolutions to put a stop to it. It was propagated against all the strength of the strongest empire that ever was in the world.

§ 9. One principal way wherein the propagation of Christianity is a proof of its truth, consists in its being an evidence of the *facts* that are the foundation of it. Christianity is built on certain great and wonderful visible facts; such as, Christ's resurrection from the dead, and the great and innumerable miracles wrought by him and his apostles, and other his followers, in Judea and many parts of the world.—These facts were always referred to, as the foundation of the whole; and Christianity always pretended to be built on

them. That Christianity, which, in effect, is no other than the belief of these facts, should be extensively propagated in, and near the places and time when the facts were said to be wrought; when and where there was so much opportunity and advantage to know the truth of the matter; is a great, standing, everlasting evidence of the truth of the facts. But as to Mahometanism, it pretends to no facts for its proof and foundation, but only Mahomet's pretences to intercourse with heaven, and his success in rapine, murder, and violence.—Belief of sensible miracles, or public attestations of heaven to Mahomet's authority and doctrines, was no part of his religion; and was not employed in its propagation.

§ 10. If we consider the propagation of Christianity as a doctrine or belief of wonderful divine facts, Mahometanism is not set up in opposition to it; because the Mahometan religion itself acknowledges the principal facts of Christianity, though it has no facts of its own to urge. And so Mahometanism rather confirms than weakens Christianity; and the propagation of Mahometanism itself, may be considered as one thing belonging to the propagation of Christianity, and as a part of that propagation, in as far as it consists in a propagation of a *professed belief* of those facts. It is so far an instance of the propagation of that which is the foundation of Christianity, that it proves all the rest. The Alcoran owns Jesus to be a great prophet; “the messenger of God,” (Surat. v. 84.) that he wrought miracles, healing a man blind from his birth, and the leprous, (Surat. v. 119.) also raising the dead; and that Jesus as born of Mary was himself a miracle, (Sur. xxiii. 52.) He often speaks of Jesus as the servant and messenger of God; (Surat. iv. 158. iii. 152. iv. 169, 170. v. 84.) Now, owning this, is in effect owning the whole. This is the foundation of the whole, and proves all the rest. It owns that Jesus was miraculously conceived and born; (Surat. iii. 47. xix. 20, 21.) and without sin. (Surat. iii. 36. xix. 19.)—Mahomet owns Jesus, and ascribes the conception of Christ alone to the power of God, and the inflation of his Spirit.—In Surat. xxi. 19. are these words, as the words of God: “And Mary was a chaste virgin, and We inspired her with Our Spirit, and set up her and her son as a miracle to all ages.”—He owned Jesus to be the Messiah foretold in the law and the prophets; Surat. iii. 45. “When the angels said, O Mary, certainly God declares to thee his own word; his name shall be Jesus Christ, the son of Mary;” Surat. xix. 29. Surat. iv.

“Certainly Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, is the ambassador of God and his word.” He owned Christ’s ascension into heaven. “God raised him (Christ) to himself;” Surat. iv. 157. Concerning Christ’s miracles, Mahomet says, Surat. iii. 45. v. 119. “God says, O Jesus, the son of Mary, I have strengthened thee by the Spirit of holiness; and thou shalt, by my leave, heal a man blind from his birth; and by my leave thou shalt raise the dead from their graves.”

§ 11. In this respect the great propagation of the Mahometan religion is a *confirmation* of revealed religion—and so of the Christian in particular, which alone can have any pretext to be a religion revealed by God—as this is a great demonstration of the extreme darkness, blindness, weakness, childishness, folly and madness of mankind in matters of religion, and shows how greatly they stand in need of a divine guide, and divine grace and strength for their help, such as the gospel reveals. And that this gross delusion has continued so long to so great an extent, shows how helpless mankind are, under ignorance and delusion in matters of religion; and what absolute need they have of extraordinary divine interposition for their relief. And besides, such a miserable, blind, helpless state of mankind, is also exactly agreeable to the representation made in the Christian revelation.

CHAP. X.

The Jewish nation have, from their very beginning, been a remarkable standing evidence of the truth of revealed religion.

§ 1. WHEN every other nation under heaven had forsaken the True God, and was overwhelmed in Heathenish darkness, the Jews had among them the knowledge and worship of the True God, and rational and true notions of his being, attributes and works; of his relation to mankind, our dependence upon him, and the worship and regards due to him. This was upheld among them alone, for so many ages, to the coming of Christ; while they were surrounded on every side, with nations vastly differing from them, and the worst of idolators. The whole world beside themselves had forgotten the True God, and forsaken his worship, and were

all the while involved in gross heathenism. They lived in the midst of the most frequented and most populous parts of the world. They did not live separated from the rest of the world as in an island or a peninsula; nor yet as divided from others by vast deserts, or impassible mountains; but on the continent, in the midst of the habitable world, with populous countries adjoining to them almost on every side. Those nations, who were their next neighbours on every side, were stedfastly gross Pagans, and some of the most barbarous idolators.

§ 2. They were not a nation that studied philosophy; they had no schools among them under the care of philosophers, who instructed their pupils in human science; yet they had most apparently far better, more sublime, and purer, notions of God and religion, of man's duty, and of divine things in general, than the best of the Heathen philosophers. Nor do they seem to have been a people any way remarkably distinguished from other nations, by their genius and natural abilities. They were a comparatively small people, not a great empire, not a vast and potent commonwealth.

§ 3. Such changes and revolutions frequently came to pass in their nation, and such was their peculiar state from time to time, that they were exceedingly liable to be corrupted and overrun with Heathenish notions, and the customs of idolatrous nations, and to grow into a conformity to the rest of the world in that respect. They were above two hundred years in Egypt, which may be looked upon as the second nation, if not the first, for being the fountain of idolatry.—And they lived there under circumstances tending the most to their being corrupted with idolatry, and brought to a conformity with the Egyptians in that respect, of any that can be imagined; especially on these accounts:—They were there in the beginning and rise of their nation. There the nation had its birth. It grew from one family of about seventy persons, with the father of the whole family at the head of it, to be more than a million of people, yea probably (reckoning male and female) about two millions. And they lived there, not separate and distinct from the Egyptians; but had continual intercourse with them. Yea, they dwelt there as inferiors, in subjection to the Egyptians; their slaves; and the Egyptians who had daily concern with them, were their masters.

§ 4. After they came into the land of Canaan, they for several ages dwelt there with the remains of the ancient Heathen inhabitants, who were so numerous and strong, as sometimes to overcome; and keep them long in subjection: which also, from time to time, their idolatrous neighbours did.— And after they had lived long in the land, ten of their tribes were carried away into final captivity, and Heathen inhabitants planted in their stead: by which the religion of the remaining two tribes was the more exposed. At last, these remaining two tribes, with the Levites, and all that were left of the ten tribes who had mixed with them, were carried away into Babylon, the chief city of Chaldea, the country that, above all in the world, (at least excepting Egypt); was the fountain of idolatry: there they dwelt during the time of one generation. So that before any of them returned, the body of the people were a new generation; born and brought up in that land of darkness, amongst idolators, their superiors and masters, and most of them the most honourable men that were then in the world; and a great part, perhaps the greater part of the nation, never returned, but continued dispersed in Heathen countries till Christ's coming. As to the nation in general, those in Canaan, and those out of it, were in subjection to the three successive Heathen monarchies, the Persian, Grecian, and Roman; and Heathen people belonging to each of those empires, often swarmed in their country.

§ 5. The people seemed to be, from their very beginning till the Babylonish captivity, exceedingly prone to idolatry; were fond, in that respect, of the customs of those Heathen neighbours, and were apt to think it honourable to be like the rest of the nations, and a disgrace to be singular. This appears, in that they actually oftentimes apostatized to idolatry, embraced the worship of the Heathen gods, and neglected the worship of the True God; and continued sometimes for a long time in their conformity to their Heathen neighbours. Yet they were wonderfully reclaimed from time to time; so that they were never suffered finally to apostatize, as all other nations in the world had done, nor were left in their apostacy for so long a space of time.

§ 6. All is the more remarkable, in that not only the true God and his spiritual worship are so infinitely diverse from the gods and religion of the Heathens; but the external institutions and rites of worship observed among the Jews,

and the law of their worship and religion, were remarkably diverse and repugnant to the religious rites of their Heathen neighbours. They were exceedingly opposite to the rites of the Egyptians, among whom they lived so long, and among whom they first became a nation. So were they also to the rites of the ancient inhabitants of Canaan, of the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, &c.

§ 7. The Jews may be considered as a remarkable evidence of the truth of revealed religion, in that they were preserved so long a time a distinct nation from all others, even since their father Jacob's time, till this day; being neither destroyed, nor abolished, nor lost, by mixing with other nations. Jacob himself was exposed to be destroyed by his brother Esau, before he was married. His family were greatly exposed to destruction, at least as to any permanent distinction from other people, when Laban pursued after him, with a design probably to kill him, and to bring back his wives and children into Padan Aram, and to keep them there; or, at least, by some means to carry back his family, and to prevent their ever going to Canaan. He and his family were in imminent danger of being destroyed, when Esau came out against him with four hundred men. His family were greatly exposed to danger by the inhabitants of Canaan, when provoked by his sons destroying the Shechemites. A series of wonderful and miraculous providences respecting Joseph, were the means of preserving the family, without which they would probably either have perished by the famine, or, in the time of that famine, have wandered away from Canaan, in such obscurity, and under such disadvantages, that they would likely have never returned any more to Canaan; and so the family would have been broken up.

§ 8. In Egypt they were greatly exposed to be destroyed, when Pharaoh set himself to effect their destruction by drowning all the males. When they had continued so long in Egypt, under such abject circumstances; it could be owing to nothing but a series of the greatest miracles, that ever they were separated from that people and land, so as to return again to dwell by themselves, to be kept a distinct nation. They were in imminent danger of being swallowed up by Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea; or of receiving such a blow, as wholly to break up the design of their proceeding to Canaan, to live there. They were exposed to

suffer that which would have prevented their proceeding, when the Amalekites met them, and fought with them.

§ 9. Nothing but a course of most astonishing miracles for forty years could have prevented their perishing in the wilderness, or being obliged to go back again into Egypt, and suffering captivity, dispersion, and ruin by the nations that dwelt around that wilderness.—They were greatly exposed to be ruined as a people, by the opposition of the Moabites, Midianites, Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan.—That ever they got the possession of Canaan, which was then held by many nations greater and stronger than they, was owing to a course of great miracles, without the intervention of which they must have perished as a people.

§ 10. After they had obtained the possession of the land, they were often greatly exposed to be utterly ruined in the time of the judges, when their enemies in those parts, who seemed to have an exceeding great hatred of them, prevailed against, and had the mastery of them. It could be owing to nothing but the special providence of God, that those enemies did not improve the advantages they had in their hands, utterly to destroy them, or at least to drive, or carry them captive, out of that land; particularly the provoked Canaanites, before the deliverance by Deborah and Barak; the Midianites and the people of the East, before the deliverance by Gideon; and after them the Philistines.

§ 11. Afterwards, in the time of the kings, there were many efforts of the enemies of Israel, utterly to destroy the whole nation, to cut them off from being a people, and to blot out their very name from under heaven, agreeably to Psalm lxxxiii. 3,—8. “They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent. They are confederate against Thee. The tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagarenes, Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre: Assur also is joined with them; they have holpen the children of Lot.”—In David’s time there was such a mighty combination of enemies against them, and so great a force was raised, that, one would think, might have been sufficient to swallow

up the nation.—After Solomon's time, the nation was greatly weakened, and so much the more exposed to ruin, by their division into two kingdoms, often contending, and seldom in amity the one with the other.—The nation was greatly exposed in Rehoboam's time to be swallowed up by Shishak king of Egypt; in Asa's time, by the vast army of the Ethiopians; and again, by the mighty army of the Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites, in Jehoshaphat's time, 2 Chron. xx. When the kings of Assyria overran and utterly destroyed the ten tribes, it was a wonder that the two tribes were spared, and the people were greatly exposed to be finally ruined by Sennacherib's army, who intended nothing else.

§ 12. When the people were carried captive into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and the whole land laid utterly waste; it was a wonder, that this did not prove an entire end to them as a people. It was a wonder they were kept distinct in their captivity; that then they were delivered; and that after they had been in captivity so long, till those that had formerly lived in Canaan were generally dead, and a new generation born in Chaldea was risen up, they should be brought back, and again settled in their own land, and established as a people there. It was a wonder that the land was vacant for them; and a wonder that they were not hindered in their design of resettling there, by the mighty opposition made to it by the Samaritans.

§ 13. The people were marvellously preserved from being blotted out from under heaven by Haman, in the time of Esther and Mordecai. They were wonderfully preserved in Antiochus's time, who was earnestly set on their utter destruction as a people; and it may be observed in general concerning them, during the time of the Old Testament, that there was no nation whatsoever against whom the nations in general were at such enmity, as the nation of the Jews; and they were, on this account, much more likely to be destroyed than any other nation.

§ 14. They lived in a part of the world, where they were more exposed to be overrun by other nations, and so to be by them either trodden down, or torn away and scattered abroad in the earth, than had they dwelt in any other part; living as it were, in the midst of the earth, betwixt three great continents, Asia, Africa and Europe. Their land lay in the very

road or thorough-fare between Asia and Africa; between Egypt and the great Eastern and Northern kingdoms, which for many ages were the greatest, most potent and active kingdoms in the world. It seems the other nations thereabout were all destroyed from being a people, before Christ's time: as the Midianites, the Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, the seven nations of Canaan, and the Philistines.

§ 15. It is remarkable, concerning a great part of the time of the Old Testament, viz. from the Babylonish captivity till Christ, that a great part of the Jews lived dispersed amongst other nations: And both those who were thus dispersed, and those that lived in their own land, were all that time in the power of the Heathen nations of the four monarchies.

§ 16. With respect to the time since Christ, their preservation as a distinct nation, has, in many respects, been still more remarkable. It was wonderful, that what happened to them in the time of Titus Vespasian, when the greater part of the nation was destroyed, and the rest dispersed all over the world in such wretched circumstances, did not prove their utter destruction as a people. And the calamities that happened to the remnant soon afterwards, made their continuance as a distinct people yet more surprising. For within half a century after their destruction by Titus, in the reign of Trajan and Adrian, the nation in general every where rose in rebellion against the Romans; and were finally every where beaten; so that in these wars the Jews had a thousand cities and fortresses destroyed, with the slaughter of about five hundred and eighty thousand men. What are left of this people have ever since remained in a total dispersion over all the world, mixt every where with other people, without any thing like a government or civil community of their own, and often extremely harrassed by other nations; though still they remain a clear and perfectly distinct nation from all other people.

PART II.

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE MYSTERIES OF SCRIPTURE.

SECT. I.

WHEN we seek for any thing in the dark by so low a faculty of discerning as the sense of feeling, or by the sense of seeing with a dim light, sometimes we cannot find it; though it be there, it seems to us to be impossible that it should be. But yet, when a clear light comes to shine into the place, and we discern by a better faculty, or the same faculty in a clearer manner, the thing appears very plain to us. So, doubtless, many truths will hereafter appear plain, when we come to look on them by the bright light of heaven, that now are involved in mystery and darkness.

§ 2. How are we ready to trust to the determinations of one, universally reputed a man of great genius, of vast penetration and insight into things, if he be positive in any thing that appears to us very mysterious, and is quite contrary to what we thought ourselves clear and certain in before? How are we ready in such a case to suspect ourselves; especially if it be a matter wherein he has been very much versed; has had much more occasion to look into it than we; and has been under greater advantages to know the truth? How much more still, if one should be positive in it, as a thing he had clearly and undoubtedly seen to be true, if he were still of ten times greater genius, and of a more penetrating insight into things, than any that ever have appeared? And, in matters of fact, if some person whom we had long known, one of great judgment and discretion, justice, integrity, and fidelity, and had always been universally so reputed by others, should declare to us, that he had seen and known that to be true which appeared to us very strange and mysterious, and concerning which we could not see how it was possible; how, in such a case, should we be ready almost to suspect our own faculties, and to give credit to such a testimony, in that which, if he had not positively asserted it, and persisted in it, we should have looked upon as perfectly incredible, and absurd to be supposed?

§ 3. From that text, John iii. 12. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" several things are manifest concerning mysteries in religion. (1.) That there are things contained in those doctrines which Christ came into the world to teach, which are not only so far above human comprehension, that men cannot easily apprehend all that is to be understood concerning them; but which are difficult to be received by the judgment or belief; "How shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" difficult, upon the same account that the doctrine of the new birth was difficult to Nicodemus, because it was so strange, and seemingly impossible. (2.) We may from the words infer, that the more persons are, in themselves, and in their own nature, above us; the more the doctrines or truths concerning them are mysterious to us, above our comprehension, and difficult to our belief; the more do those things that are really true concerning them, contain seeming inconsistencies and impossibilities. For Christ, in the preceding verses, had been speaking of something that is true concerning man, being of the same nature, an inhabitant of the same world with ourselves; which, therefore, Christ calls an earthly thing. And this seemed very mysterious and impossible, and to contain great seeming inconsistencies. "How can a man be born when he is old?" This seemed to be a contradiction. And after Christ had somewhat explained himself, still the doctrine seemed strange and impossible; v. 9. "How can these things be?" Nicodemus still looked upon it as incredible, and, on that account, did not believe it at that time, as is implied in these words of Christ; "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not." But Christ here plainly signifies, that he had other truths to teach that were not about man, an earthly inhabitant, but about a person vastly above men, even about himself who is from heaven, and in heaven, as in the next verse: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven; even the Son of man which is in heaven." Which, therefore, it would be much more difficult to men's understanding and judgment, seeming to contain greater impossibilities and inconsistencies; as he then proceeds immediately to declare to him an heavenly thing, as he calls it, viz. that Christ, an heavenly and divine person, should die; ver. 14, 15. Such a mysterious doctrine, so strange, and seemingly inconsistent and impossible, that a divine person should die, is more strange than that men should be born again. Hence,

when divines argue, from the mysterious nature of many things here below with which we are daily conversant, that it would be very unreasonable to suppose but that there should be things concerning God which are much more mysterious; and that, therefore, it is unreasonable to object against the truth of the doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, &c.; they argue justly, because they argue as Christ argued.

§ 4. The wiser heathens were sensible, that the things of the gods are so high above us, that what appertains to them should appear exceedingly mysterious and wonderful to us; and that it is therefore unreasonable to disbelieve what we are taught concerning them on that account. This is fully expressed by Pythagoras; viz. "*Concerning the gods, disbelieve nothing wonderful, nor yet concerning divine things.*" This, says Jamblicus, declareth the superlative excellency of God instructing us, and puts us in mind, that we ought not to estimate the divine power by our own judgment. The Pythagoreans stretched this rule beyond the line of divine revelation, to the belief of every oriental tradition." Gale's Court of the Gentiles, p. 2. b. 2. c. 8. 190.

§ 5. It is not necessary that persons should have clear ideas of the subject of a proposition, in order to be rationally convinced of the truth of the proposition. There are many truths, of which mathematicians are convinced by strict demonstration, concerning many kinds of quantities, as, surd quantities and fluxions; but concerning which they have no clear ideas.

§ 6. Supposing that mankind in general were a species of far less capacity than they are; so much less, that, when men are come to full ripeness of judgment and capacity, they arrived no higher than that degree to which children generally arrive at seven years of age; and supposing a revelation to be made to mankind, in such a state and degree of capacity, of many such propositions in philosophy as are now looked upon as undoubted truths; and let us suppose, at the same time, the same degree of pride and self-confidence as there is now; what cavilling and objecting would there be! Or, supposing a revelation of these philosophical truths had been made to mankind, with their present degree of natural capacity, in some ancient generation—suppose that which was in Joshua's time—in that degree of acquired knowledge and learning

which the world had arrived at then, *how incredible* would those truths have seemed!

§ 7. If things, which fact and experience make certain, such as the miseries infants are sometimes the subjects of in this world, had been exhibited only in a revelation of things in an unseen state, they would be as much disputed as the Trinity and other mysteries revealed in the bible.

§ 8. There is nothing impossible or absurd in the doctrine of the *Incarnation of Christ*. If God can join a body and a rational soul together, which are of natures so heterogeneous and opposite, that they cannot, of themselves, act one upon another; may he not be able to join two spirits together, which are of natures more similar? And, if so, he may, for ought we know to the contrary, join the soul or spirit of a man to himself. Had reason been so clear in it, that God cannot be incarnate, as many pretend, it could never have suffered such a notion to gain ground, and possess the minds of so many nations: nay, and of Julian himself, who says, that "Jupiter begat Esculapius out of his own proper substance, and sent him down to Epidaurus, to heal the distempers of mankind." Reason did not hinder Spinoza, Blount, and many other modern philosophers, from asserting, that God may have a body; or rather, that the universe, or the matter of the universe, is God. Many nations believed the incarnation of Jupiter himself. Reason, instead of being utterly averse to the notion of a divine incarnation, hath easily enough admitted that notion, and suffered it to pass, almost without contradiction, among the most philosophical nations of the world.

§ 9. "In thinking of God's raising so many myriads of spirits, and such prodigious masses of matter out of nothing, we are lost and astonished, as much as in the contemplation of the Trinity. We can follow God but one or two steps in his lowest and plainest works, till all becomes mystery and matter of amazement to us. How, then, shall we comprehend Himself? How shall we understand His nature, or account for His actions? In that He contains what is infinitely more inconceivable than all the wonders of his creation put together." Deism revealed, edit. 2 vol. ii. p. 93, 94.

Those who deny the *Trinity*, because of its mysteriousness and seeming inconsistency, yet, generally own God's

certain prescience of men's free actions, which they suppose to be free in such a sense, as not to be necessary. So that we may do, or may not do, that which God certainly foresees. "They also hold, that such a freedom without necessity, is necessary to morality; and that virtue and goodness consists in any one's doing good when he might do evil. And yet they suppose, that God acts by "the eternal law of nature and reason, and that it is imposisble that he should transgress that law, and do evil; because that would be a contradiction to his own nature, which is infinitely and unchangeably virtuous. Now this seems a flat contradiction. To say, that the infinite goodness of God's nature makes it utterly impossible for God to do evil, is exactly the same as to say, he is under a natural necessity not to do evil. And to say, he is morally free, is to say he may do evil. Therefore the necessity and freedom in this case being both moral, the contradiction is flat and plain; and amounts to this, that God, in respect to good and evil actions, is both a necessary and free agent. Dr. Clark, in his treatise on the Attributes, labours to get clear of this contradiction upon these principles of liberty, but without success; and leaves it just where all men, who hold the same principles, must be forced to leave it. Therefore, they hold such mysteries, in respect to Deity, that are even harder to be conceived of, or properly expressed, and explained, than the doctrine of the Trinity.

"When we talk of God, who is infinite and incomprehensible, it is natural to run into notions and terms which it is impossible for us to reconcile. And in lower matters, that are more within our knowledge and comprehension, we shall not be able to keep ourselves clear of them. To say that a curve line, setting out from a point within a hair's breadth of a right line, shall run towards that right line as swift as thought, and yet never be able to touch it, seems contrary to common sense; and, were it not clearly demonstrated in the conchoid of Nechomedes, could never be believed. Matter is infinitely divisible; and therefore, a cubical inch of gold may be divided into an infinity of parts; and there can be no number greater than that which contains an infinity. Yet another cubical inch of gold may be infinitely divided also; and therefore, the parts of both cubes must be more numerous than the parts of one only. Here is a palpable contrariety of ideas, and a flat contradiction of terms. We are confounded and lost in the consideration of infinities; and surely, most of all, in the

consideration of that *Infinite of infinites*. We justly admire that saying of the philosopher, that *God is a Being whose centre is every where, and circumference nowhere*, as one of the noblest and most exalted flights of human understanding; and yet, not only the terms are absurd and contradictory, but yet the very ideas that constitute it, when considered attentively, are repugnant to one another. Space and duration are mysterious abysses, in which our thoughts are confounded with demonstrable propositions, to all sense and reason flatly contradictory to one another. Any two points of time, though never so distant, are exactly in the middle of eternity. The remotest points of space that can be imagined or supposed, are each of them precisely in the centre of infinite space." Deism revealed, vol. ii. p. 109, 110, 111.

Here might have been added the mysteries of God's eternal duration, it being without succession, present, before and after, all at once: *Vitæ interminabilis tota simul et perfecta possessio*.

§ 10. To reject every thing but what we can first see to be agreeable to our reason, tends, by degrees, to bring every thing relating not only to revealed religion, but even to natural religion, into doubt; to make all its doctrines appear with dim evidence, like a shadow, or the ideas of a dream, till they are all neglected as worthy of no regard. It tends to make men doubt of the several attributes of God, and so, in every respect, to doubt what kind of being God is; and to make men doubt about the forgiveness of sin, and about the duties of religion, prayer and giving thanks, social worship, &c. It will tend, at last, to make men esteem the science of religion as of no value, and so totally neglect it; and from step to step it will lead to scepticism, atheism, and at length to barbarity.

§ 11. Concerning common sense, it is to be observed, that common inclination, or the common dictates of inclination, are often called common sense. When any thing is shocking to the common dispositions or inclinations of men, that is called a contradicting of common sense. So, the doctrine of the extreme and everlasting torments of hell, being contrary to men's common folly and stupidity, is often called contrary to common sense. Men, through stupidity, are insensible of the great evil of sin; and so the punishment of sin threatened in the word of God disagrees with this insensibility, and it is said to be contradictory to common sense.

In this case, that turn of mind which arises from a *wicked* disposition, goes for common sense.

“ We ought never to deny, because we cannot conceive. If this were not so, then a man born blind would reason right, when he forms this syllogism, “ We know the figure of bodies only by handling them; but it is impossible to handle them at a great distance; therefore, it is impossible to know the figure of far distant bodies.” To undeceive the blind man, we may prove to him that this is so, from the concurrent testimony of all who surround him. But we can never make him perceive how this is so. It is therefore a fundamental maxim in all true philosophy, that many things may be incomprehensible, and yet demonstrable; that though seeing clearly be a sufficient reason for affirming, yet, not seeing at all, can never be a reason for denying.” Ramsay’s *Philosophical Principles of Religion*, vol. i. p. 22, 23.

§ 12. One method used to explode every thing in religion that is in the least difficult to the understanding, is to ridicule all distinctions in religion. The unreasonableness of this may appear from what Mr. Locke observes concerning discerning and judgment. *Hum. Underst. book ii. chap. 2.* “ Accurately discriminating ideas one from another, is of that consequence to the other knowledge of the mind, that, so far as this faculty is in itself dull, or not rightly made use of, for distinguishing one thing from another, so far our notions are confused, and our reason and judgment disturbed or misled. If in having ideas in the memory ready at hand, consists quickness of parts; in this, of having them unconfused, and being able nicely to distinguish one thing from another, where there is but the least difference, consists in a great measure the exactness of judgment, and clearness of reason, which is to be observed in one man above another. Judgment lies in separating carefully one from another, ideas wherein can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being misled by similitude, and by affinity to take one thing for another.”

So Dr. Turnbull, in his *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, part i. chap. 3. p. 94. “ Judgment is rightly said to lie in nicely distinguishing the disagreements and variances or differences of ideas; those especially which lie more remote from common observation, and are not generally adverted to. The man of judgment or discretion (for so discretion properly signifies), may be defined to be one who has a particular ap-

titude to descry differences of all kinds between objects, even the most hidden and remote from vulgar eyes."

§ 13. If any respect to the Divine Being is of importance, then speculative points are of importance; for the only way whereby we know what he is, is by speculation.— If our doctrines concerning him are not right, it will not be that Being, but some other, that we have respect for. So it may be said concerning our respect for Christ. If our doctrines concerning him, concerning his divinity, for instance, are false, we have not respect for the Christ of whom the Scriptures speak, but for an imaginary person, infinitely diverse. When it is said by some, that the only fundamental article of faith is, that Jesus is the Messiah; if thereby be meant, that a person called by that name, or that lived at such a time or place, was the Messiah, that name not implying any properties or qualities of his person, the doctrine is exceedingly unreasonable; for surely the *name* and the *place* are not of so great importance as some other things essential in his person, and have not so great concern in the identity of the object of our ideas and respect, as the person the gospel reveals. It is one great reason why speculative points are thought to be of so little importance, that the modern religion consists so little in respect to the divine Being, and almost wholly in benevolence to men.

§ 14. Concerning what is often said by some, that all things necessary to salvation are plain and clear, let us consider how, and in what sense, this is true, and in what sense it is not true. *1st*, It is true, that all things necessary to salvation are clearly and plainly revealed. But it does not follow, that they shall *appear* to be plainly revealed to *all men*. No divine thing can have evidence sufficient to appear evident to *all men*, however great their prejudices, and however perverse their dispositions. *2dly*, If thereby is meant, that all things necessary to be believed are easily comprehended, there is no reason in such an assertion, nor is it true.

Some late writers insist, that, for a thing to be revealed, and yet remain mysterious, is a contradiction; that it is as much as to say, a thing is revealed, and yet hid. I answer: The thing revealed is the truth of the doctrine; so that the *truth* of it no longer remains hid, though many things concerning the *manner* may be so. Yet many things concerning the nature of the things revealed may be clear, though many

other things concerning their nature may remain hid. God requires us to understand no more than is intelligibly revealed. That which is not distinctly revealed, we are not required distinctly to understand. It may be necessary for us to know a thing in part, and yet not necessary to know it perfectly.

§ 15. The importance of all Christian doctrines whatsoever, will naturally be denied, in consequence of denying that one great doctrine of the necessity of Christ's satisfaction to Divine justice, and maintaining those doctrines that establish men's own righteousness, as that on which, and for which, they are accepted of God. For that great Christian doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, his vicarious sufferings and righteousness, by which he offered an infinite price to God for our pardon and acceptance to eternal favour and happiness, is that to which all evangelical doctrines, all doctrines beside the truths of natural religion, have relation; and they are of little importance, comparatively, any other way, than as they have respect to that. This is, as it were, the centre and hinge of all doctrines of pure revelation.

§ 16. Indeed, the Papists, who are very far from having such a notion of that evangelical faith, which is the special condition of salvation in opposition to works, and have forsaken the evangelical notion of true saving religion, yet, with fiery zeal, insist on the profession of a great number of doctrines, and several of the doctrines of pure revelation, as the Trinity, &c. But this in them flows not from any regard to their influence in internal saving religion, but from quite another view, *i. e.* to uphold their tyranny. These are the doctrines which have been handed down among them by their church from ancient tradition; and, to maintain the credit of the infallibility, and divine authority and dominion of their hierarchy over men's faith, they must be zealous against any that presume to deny Christ's doctrines, because they look upon it as an infringement on the high authority they claim. And some Protestants have a zeal for doctrines from like views; doctrines indeed for which they have no great value, in themselves considered.

§ 17. That it is not alone sufficient to believe this one article, that a person of the name of *Jesus* came from God to reveal his will to man, without knowing or determining what

he was, or concerning his nature and qualities, is evident from this, that it is often spoken of as necessary to *know* Christ. It is said, "This is eternal life, to *know* thee, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

§ 18. There are two things especially that make modern fashionable divines look on doctrines of revealed religion of little importance. One is, their mistake about the *conditions* of salvation; another is, their mistake about the *nature* of true virtue, placing it chiefly, and most essentially, in benevolence to men, and so little in respect to God and Christ. If Christian virtue consists very much in a proper respect to Christ, then certainly it is of great importance to know what sort of person he is, at least, as to that particular wherein his excellency or worthiness of regard consists, which is surely his divinity, if he be a divine person. Another thing on which a proper respect to him depends, is his relation to us, and our dependence upon him; which surely chiefly depends on his satisfaction and merits for us, if he has satisfied and merited for us. The reasons or grounds of the love and honour to Christ required of us, consist chiefly in two things: (1.) In what he *is*: and, (2.) In what he has *done* for us.—Therefore, with regard to the latter, it concerns us greatly to know, at least as to the principal things, what they are. And if he has satisfied for our sins; if he has suffered in our stead; if he has truly purchased eternal life and happiness for us; if he has redeemed us from an extremely sinful, miserable, helpless state, a state wherein we deserved no mercy, but eternal misery, then these are principal things.

Another reason why doctrines are thought to be of little importance, is a notion of *sincerity* wherein true virtue consists, as what may be prior to any means of it that God grants; as if it was what every man had in his power, antecedently to all means; and so the means are looked upon as of little importance. But the absurdity of this may be easily manifested. If it be independent of all means, then it may be independent of natural information, or of the truths of the light of nature, as well as of revealed religion: and men may *sincerely* regard and honour they know not what. The truths of natural religion, wherein Christians differ from the most ignorant, brutish, and deluded idolators, the most savage and cruel of the heathen nations, may be of little importance. And the reason why they have this notion of sincerity ante-

cedent to means, and so independent on means, is, that they have a notion that sincerity is independent on God, any otherwise than as they depend on him for their creation. They conceive it to be independent on his sovereign will and pleasure. If they were sensible that they depend on God to give it according to his pleasure, it would be easy and natural to acknowledge, that God gives it in his own way, and by his own means.

19. If any article of faith at all concerning Jesus Christ be of importance, it must be of importance to know or believe something concerning his person; what sort of a person or being he was. And if any thing concerning him be of importance to be known and believed, it must be something wherein his excellency or worthiness of regard consists: For nothing can be of importance to be known or believed about him, but in order to some regard or respect of heart. But most certainly, if any thing of his excellency and dignity be of importance to be known or believed, it must be of importance at least to know so much about him, as to know whether he be God or a mere creature; for herein lies the greatest difference, as to dignity, that possibly can be. This difference is infinite. If it be of importance to know how worthy he is, then it doubtless is of importance that we should not be ignorant of, and deny, as it were, all his dignity, or so much of it, that what remains shall be absolutely as nothing to that which is denied. It is of importance that we love Christ, or have respect to him as one that is excellent, and worthy of esteem and love. The apostle says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." And doubtless, true love to Christ is in some respect suitable to the worthiness and excellency of his person.—Therefore it is of importance to believe, and not to deny those doctrines which exhibit his worthiness. It is of importance that we do not in effect deny the whole of his worthiness.

§ 20. How many things were believed by the ancient philosophers about divine matters, even the most rational of them more mysterious than the doctrine of the Trinity, chiefly because such things were handed to them by the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, or Persians, or on the authority of some great master? Yet these things were imbibed without

much difficulty, the incomprehensibleness of the doctrines being no objection to their receiving them.

§ 21. There are things evidently true concerning the nature of our own souls, that seem strange paradoxes, and are seeming contradictions; as, that our souls are in no place, and yet have a being; or, if they are supposed to be in a place, that yet they are not confined to place, and limited to certain space; or, if they be, that they are not of a certain figure; or, if they are figurate, that their properties, faculties, and acts, should or should not be so too.

§ 22. If many things we all see and know of the mortality of mankind, the extreme sufferings of infants, and other things innumerable in the state of the world of mankind, were only matter of doctrine which we had no notice of any other way than by revelation, and not by fact and experience; have we not reason to think, from what we see of the temper of this age, that they would be exceedingly quarrelled with, objected mightily against, as inconsistent with God's moral perfections, not tending to amiable ideas of the Godhead? &c.

§ 23. The definition of a *mystery*, according to Stapferus, Theol. Polem. p. 263. and 858. is this: A *mystery* is a religious doctrine, which must be made known by immediate revelation, and cannot be known and demonstrated from the principles of reason, but is above reason, and which in this whole universe has nothing like itself, but differs from all those truths which we discover in this system of the world.—(Ibid. p. 859.) It appears from this definition, that whatever is known by divine revelation, and is not certain from the principles of reason, is a *mystery*; otherwise it could not be said to be revealed. Mysteries are the first thing which we conceive concerning revelation; for no revelation can be conceived without mysteries, and therefore they constitute the sum and essence of revelation.

§ 24. It is to be observed, that we ought to distinguish between those things which were written in the sacred books by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and those which were only committed to writing by the direction of the Holy Spirit. To the former class belong all the mysteries of salvation, or all those things which respect the means of our deliverance taught in the gospel, which could not be known

from the principles of reason, and therefore must be revealed. But to the other class those things belong, which either are already known from natural religion, but are of service to inculcate duty on man, and to demonstrate the necessity of revealed means of salvation; or are histories, useful to illustrate and to assure us of the doctrines revealed, and which point out the various degrees of revelation, the different dispensations of salvation, and the various modes of governing the church of God: all which are necessary to be known in the further explanation of mysteries.

§ 25. Mysteries constitute the criterion of divine revelation: so absurdly do they act, who allow a revelation, and deny mysteries; or deny revelation for this reason, that it contains mysteries. What the sum and essence of revealed religion are, is plain from the end of it, which is to point out to sinful man the means of obtaining salvation, and of recovering the divine favour. But this is, that Jesus Christ is the only and most perfect cause of salvation, to be received by a true faith. This doctrine, however, is a mystery of godliness manifestly great; 1 Tim. iii. 16. And thus that great mystery constitutes the sum and essence of revelation. The essence of revealed religion consists in this, that men by a true faith receive this doctrine, which the apostle calls a mystery manifestly great. Therefore, the knowledge of the greatest mystery belongs to the very essence of the religion of a sinner. How absurd do many of the doctrines of mathematicians and astronomers appear to ignorant men, when they cannot see the reason of those doctrines, although they are most true and evident, so that not the least doubt concerning them can remain in the mind of a thorough mathematician? (Ibid. tom. iii. p. 560.)

§ 26. Since, in religion, there are some primary truths, and others more remote, which are deduced from the former by reasoning, and so are secondary—and these last may not be known, though the primary are known, but when once they are known they cannot be denied—it follows, that those articles which constitute religion, and so are fundamental, are to be distinguished into primary and secondary. The primary are those of which a man cannot be ignorant, consistently with true religion and his own salvation; and they are necessary with a necessity of means. The secondary are those of which a man may be ignorant, consistently with his resting upon the

foundation of true religion, and with his own salvation ; and those are necessary with a necessity of command. Therefore, to the same man, certain doctrines may be now fundamental, which were not fundamental to him before he knew them (Ibid. tom. i. p. 524, 525.)

Joh. Chr. Kirchmejerus, in his *Dissert.* concerning fundamental articles, says, "They may be either reduced to fewer, or extended to more ; as often one article may include the rest, and so all may be reduced to that one ; and, on the other hand, that one, according to the various truths contained in it, may be divided into several. Therefore, authors do not contradict themselves, who reduce all fundamental articles to one : for they cannot well be determined by their number ; because as many fundamental truths are contained in one fundamental truth, as there are essential properties belonging to the truths thus contained. Therefore, the holy scripture often sums up all fundamental articles in one, as in John xvii. 3. This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Sometimes it distinguishes them into several ; as in 1 Tim. i. 5. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (Ibid. tom. i. p. 528.)

§ 27. On account of the various degrees of men's capacities, and the various circumstances of the times in which they live, one man may know truths which another cannot know. Whence it follows, that the very same articles are not fundamental to all men ; but accordingly as revelation hath been more or less complete, according to the several dispensations under which men have lived, their various natural abilities, and their various modes and circumstances of living, different articles are, and have been, fundamental to different men. This is very plain from the different degrees of knowledge before and since the coming of Christ ; for before his coming, many truths lay hid, which are now set in the most clear light : And the instance of the apostles, abundantly shows the truth of what I have now advanced ; who, although they were already in a state of grace, and their salvation was secured, yet for some time were ignorant of the necessity of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of the true nature of his kingdom. Whereas, he who now does not acknowledge the necessity of Christ's death, is by all means to be considered as in fundamental error. Therefore, as a man hath received

of God greater or less natural abilities, so let the number of articles to which he shall give his assent be greater or smaller; and as revelation hath been made, or information hath been given, to a man, more clearly or obscurely, in the same proportion is more or less required of him. Therefore, in our own case, we ought to be cautious of even the smallest errors, and to aim at the highest degree of knowledge in divine truths. In the case of others, we ought to judge concerning them with the greatest prudence, mildness, and benevolence. Hence we see, that a certain precise number of articles, which shall be necessary and fundamental to every man, cannot be determined. *Ibid.* p. 531.

PART III.

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST AND
THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

SECT. I.

IF the temptation to the children of Israel was so great, to idolize the Brazen Serpent, a lifeless piece of brass, for the temporal salvation which some of their forefathers had by looking on it; how great would be their temptation to idolatry by worshipping Christ, if he were a mere creature, from whom mankind receive so great benefits? If that Brazen Serpent must be broken in pieces, to remove the temptation to idolatry, 2 Kings xviii. 4. shall so great a temptation be laid before the world to idolize a mere creature, by setting him forth in the manner that he is set forth in Scripture?

§ 2. Must Moses's body be concealed, lest the children of Israel should worship the remains of him whom God made the instrument of such great things? And shall another mere creature—whom men, on account of the works he has done, are under infinitely greater temptation to worship—be most openly and publicly exhibited, as exalted to heaven, seated at God's own right hand, made Head over all things, Ruler of the universe, &c. in the manner that Christ is? Was not this the temptation to all nations to idolatry, viz. That men had been distinguished as great conquerors, deliverers, and the instruments of great benefit? And shall God make a mere creature the instrument of so many greater benefits, and in such a manner as Christ is represented to be in the scripture, without an infinitely greater temptation to idolatry?

§ 3. When the rich young man called Christ *Good Master*, not supposing him to be God, did Christ reject it, and reprove him for calling him so? He said, "There is none *good* but One, that is God"; meaning, that none other was possessed of goodness that was to be trusted. And yet, shall this same Jesus, if indeed not that God who only is to be

called *good*, or trusted in as such, be called in scripture, He that is Holy; He that is true? the Amen the Faithful and True Witness? the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace? the blessed and the only Potentate; the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? the Lord of Life, that has life in himself, that all men might honour the Son, as they honour the Father? the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God? the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End? God, Jehova; Elohim, the King of Glory? Compare Isa. xlii. 8. Ps. lxxvii. 18. Isa. xlv. 20, 21, &c. "They pray unto a God that cannot save—Tell ye and bring them near; let them take counsel together—There is no God else beside me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me." Yet it is said of Christ, that "He is able to save unto the uttermost." Yea, the Messiah, in this very book, is spoken of as mighty to save; saving by his own arm, and by the greatness of his strength, Isa. lxiii.—6. compared with Rev. xiv. 15. And it is evident, that it is his character, in the most eminent manner, to be the Saviour of God's people; and that with respect to what is infinitely the highest and greatest work of salvation; the greatest deliverance from the most dreadful evil, from the greatest, worst, and strongest enemies, and bringing them to the greatest happiness. It follows, Isaiah xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else." Here it is spoken of as the great glory of God, and peculiar to him, that he is an universal Saviour, not only of the Jews, but of all nations. And this is the peculiar character of Jesus. He is the Saviour of all nations. The glory of calling and saving the Gentiles, is represented as peculiarly belonging to him; so that he has this divine prerogative, which is spoken of here as belonging to the One only God, and to none else. And, which is more than all this, these very things are applied to Christ in the New Testament, Philip. ii. 10, 11. "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, of things in earth, and things under the earth." And the things spoken of in the following verses, as the peculiar prerogative of God, in distinction from all other beings, as the only Saviour, viz. having righteousness, and being justified in him, are every where in the New Testament most eminently ascribed to Christ, as in a most special manner belonging to him.

§ 4. Being the *Saviour* of God's people, is every where in

the Old Testament mentioned as the peculiar work of the Deity. The heathens are reproached for worshipping gods that could not save; and God says to the idolatrous Israelites, "Go to the gods whom ye have served, let them deliver you." See Isaiah xliii. 3, 10—15, in which verses we have another clear demonstration of the divinity of Christ.* Trusting is abundantly represented as a principal thing in that peculiar respect due to God alone, as of the essence of divine adoration due to no other than God. And yet, how is Christ represented as the peculiar object of the faith and trust of all God's people, of all nations, as having all sufficiency for them? Trusting in any other, is greatly condemned; is a thing, than which nothing is represented as more dangerous, provoking to God, and bringing his curse on man.

§ 5. And how often is being the *Redeemer* of God's people spoken of as the peculiar character of the mighty God of Jacob, the First and Last, the Lord of Hosts, the only God, the Holy One of Israel? So Isa. xli. 14. xliii. 14. xlv. 6. 24. xlvii. 4. xlviii. 17. xlix. 7. 26. liv. 5.; and lx. 16.) And it may be observed, that when God has this title of the *Redeemer of Israel* ascribed to him in those places, it is joined with some other of the peculiar and most exalted names and titles of the Most High God: such as, the Holy One of Israel; (so Isa. xli. 14. xlviii. 14. xlvii. 4. xlviii. 17. xlv. 5. and xlix. 7.) The Mighty One of Jacob, (chap. xlix. 26. and lx. 16.) The Lord of Hosts, (Isa. xlvii. 4. and xlv. 6.) The God of the whole earth, (chap. liv. 5.) The First and the Last, besides whom there is no God, (xlv. 6.) The Jehovah that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and spreadeth abroad the earth by himself (ver. 24.) Yet the Messiah, in this very book, is spoken of as the Redeemer of God's people in the most eminent manner (chap. lxiii.) 1—6.

§ 6. God is careful that his people should understand, that their honour and love and praise for the redemption out of Egypt, belongs only to *him*, and therefore is careful to inform them, that he *alone* redeemed them out of Egypt, and that there was no other God with him; and to make use of that as a principal argument why they should have no other

* See also Hos. viii. 4. See also Isa. xlix. 26. and lx. 16. Deut. xxxiii; 29. Jer. iii. 23. Jonah ii. 8, 9. Psalm iii. 8. Isa. xxv. 9.

Gods before him. (See Deut. xxxii. 12.; Exod. xx. 3.; Psal. lxxxii. 8, 9, 10.; Hos. xiii. 4.) The words in that place are remarkable: "Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt; and thou shalt know no God but me; for there is no Saviour besides me." If God insisted on that as a good reason why his people should know no God besides him, that he alone was their Saviour to save them out of Egypt; would he afterwards appoint another to be their Saviour in an infinitely greater salvation?

§ 7. The works of *creation* being ascribed to Christ, most evidently prove his proper divinity. For God declares, that he is Jehovah that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and spread abroad the earth by himself, Isa. xlv. 24. (See also the next chapter, xlv. 5—6. 12). And not only is the creation of the world ascribed to Christ often in scripture, but that which in Isaiah is called the New creation, which is here represented as an immensely greater and more glorious work than the old creation, viz. the work of redemption, as this prophet himself explains it, (Isa. lxxv. 17, 18, 19) is every where, in a most peculiar and distinguishing manner, ascribed to Christ. 2 Peter i. 1. "Through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." *Ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.* Tit. ii. 2. "Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" *Τὴν μεγάλην Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.* It is agreeable to the manner of the apostle's expressing himself in both places, to intend one and the same person, viz. *Christ*, under two titles: As when speaking of God the Father, in Eph. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." *ὁ Θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ.* See Dr. Goodwin's works, vol. i. p. 23, 94.

§ 8. That passage in Isaiah xl. 13, 14, "Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord?" proves Christ's divinity; for Christ directs the spirit of the Lord. See John xvi. 13—15. and many other places. Compare the following texts, set in opposite columns; those in the first column are represented as belonging to *God* only, which yet in the second column, are given to Christ.

The name GOD.

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Isaiah xlv. 5. | John i. 1. |
| — xlv. 8. | Heb. i. 8. |
| — xlvi. 9. | Rom. ix. 5. |

The name JEHOVAH.

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Psalm cii. 25, &c. | Heb. i. 10. |
| Zech. xi. 12. | Matt. xxvii. 9, 10. |
| Zech. xii. 10. | John xix. 37. |
| Isaiah xl. 3. | Mark i. 3. |
| Hos. i. 7. | Luke ii. 11. |

Divine Perfections.

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Kings viii. 39. | John ii. 24. xvi. 30. Acts i. 24. |
| Jer. xvii. 10. | Rev. ii. 3. |
| Isaiah xlv. 6. | Rev. i. 17. |
| Rev. i. 8. | Rev. xxii. 13. |
| 1 Tim. vi. 15. | Rev. xvii. 14. & xix. 16. |
| Isaiah x. 21. | Isaiah ix. 6. |
| Rom. x. 12. | Acts x. 36. Rom. ix. 5. |
| Psalm xc. 2. | Prov. viii. 22, &c. |

Divine Works.

| | |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| Neh. ix. 6. | John i. 3. Col. i. 16, 17. |
| Gen. i. 1. | Heb. i. 10. |

Divine Worship.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Exod. xx. 3. | Heb. i. 6. |
| Matt. iv. 10. & Gal. iv. 8. | John v. 23. * |

§ 9. If Christ in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, he must be from *eternity*; for then he is before the beginning, by which must be meant, the beginning of time; the beginning of that kind of duration which has *beginning* and *following*, before and after, belonging to it. The beginning of created existence, or, *the beginning of the creation which God created*, as the phrase is, Mark iii. 19. In Proverbs viii. 22. it is said, "The Lord possessed me before his works of old;" and therefore before those works which in

* See WATERLAND'S answer to some queries.

Genesis i. 1. are said to be made in the beginning. God's eternity is expressed thus, Psalm xc. 2. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst created the earth and the world, even from everlasting." So it is said, Prov. viii. 22. and "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." &c.

§ 10. That the kingdom of the Messiah is so commonly called the *kingdom of heaven*, is an evidence that the Messiah is God. By the kingdom of heaven is plainly meant a kingdom wherein God doth reign, or is King. The phrase, the kingdom of heaven seems to be principally taken from Dan. ii. 14. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom;" where the meaning plainly is, after the heads of those four great monarchies have each one had their turn, and erected kingdoms for themselves in their turn, and the last monarchy shall be divided among ten kings; finally, the God of heaven shall take the dominion from them all, and shall set up a kingdom for himself. He shall take the kingdom, and shall rule for ever. In this book, chap. iv. 26. it is said, "After that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule." The words in the foregoing verse express what is meant: "Until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." Therefore, by the kingdom of heaven which shall be set up, is meant the kingdom wherein God himself shall be the king; not as reigning and administering by other kings or judges, as he was king in the time of the Judges, and in the time of David and Solomon, Hezekiah and Josiah, &c. and as he always doth in the time of good kings: but he shall set up *his kingdom*, in distinction from all kingdoms or states, wherein the heavens shall rule, or God himself shall be king. And therefore the kingdom of heaven is often called the kingdom of God, in the New Testament. And it is abundantly prophesied in the Old Testament, that in the days of the Messiah, God shall take to himself the kingdom, and shall reign as king, in contradistinction to other reigning subordinate beings. And that God himself shall reign on earth, as king among his people, is abundantly manifest from many prophecies.* And in this very prophecy of Daniel, chap. vii. where this kingdom, which the

* See Psalm xciii. 1. xcvi. 10. xcvii. at the beginning, and xcix. 1. Isa. xxxiii. 22. Isa. xl. 9, 10, 11. Zeph. iiii. 14, 15. Mal. iii. 1, 2; 5.

Lord of heaven should at last set up (plainly this same kingdom), is more fully spoken of, it is manifest, that the Messiah is to be the king in that kingdom, who shall reign as vested with full power, and complete kingly authority. †

§ 11. God is several times called in scripture, the *Glory of Israel*, or of God's people; and it is a title peculiar to him, wherein he appears as especially distinguished from false gods. Jer. ii. 11. "Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their Glory for that which doth not profit." Psal. cvi. 20. "Thus they changed their Glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass." But we find that Christ in the New Testament is spoken of as "the Glory of God's people Israel." Luke ii. 23.

§ 12. What is said in Job xix. 25—27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. is a proof of the divinity of Christ. For here, he whom Job calls his Redeemer, his *God*, is God; "Yet in my flesh shall I see God." But it is very manifest, that Christ is he who is most properly and eminently our Redeemer or *God*: And here Job says, that God shall stand at the latter day, at the general resurrection, on the earth; when he shall see him in his flesh. But the person that shall then stand on the earth, we know, is no other than Jesus Christ. And how often, in other places, both in the Old Testament and the New, is *Christ's* coming to judgment, spoken of as *God's* coming to judgment? Christ's appearing, as God's appearing? and our standing before the judgment seat of Christ, as our standing before God's judgment seat?

§ 13. Luke i. 16, 17. "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Here John the Baptist is spoken of as going before the Lord, the God of the children of Israel, to prepare his way; agreeably to the prophecies; particularly, Mal. iii. 1. and iv. 5, 6. But who is this person who is called the Lord, the God of Israel, whose forerunner, John the Baptist, is to

† See also Dan. ix. 25. Gen. xlix. Psalms ii. cx. lxxxix. and xlv. Isaiah ix. and xi. Zech. vi. Jer. xxiii. 5. xxx. 9. and xxxiii. 15. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. and xxxvii. 24. Hos. iii. 5. Zech. vi. 12. &c. and in many other places.

prepare his way? Nothing is more manifest, than that it is Jesus Christ. See Mark i. 1—3. “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight;” (alluding to two prophecies, viz. Mal. iii. 1. and Isaiah xl. 3.) Here is a distinction of two persons; the one speaking in the first person singular, “Behold I send my messenger;” the other spoken to in the second person, “before *thy* face, which shall prepare *thy* way before *thee* ;” which makes it evident that the person spoken of, and whose forerunner he was to prepare his way, was Jesus Christ. So Matt. xi. 10. Luke vii. 27. See also how manifest this is by John i. 19. “And this is the record of John.” Verse 23. “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias;” with the following verses, especially ver. 31. “And I knew him not, but that he should be made manifest to Israel: therefore am I come baptizing with water.” So that it is evident, that Christ is he that in the 1st of Luke is called the Lord, or, Jehovah the God of Israel, as the phrase is in the original of the Old Testament, in places from whence this phrase is taken. Therefore it is evident, that Christ is one God with the Father; for the Scripture is very express, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, is but one Jehovah; as, Deut. vi. 4. “Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.”

§ 14. And if we look into those prophecies of the Old Testament referred to in these places of the evangelists, it is manifest, that what they foretel concerns a forerunner to prepare the way for the only true and supreme God; as, Isa. xl. 3. “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of *Jehovah*; make straight in the desert a high way for *Our God*.” This is evidently the same that is spoken of in the following parts of the chapter; as in verse 9 and following verses: “Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold *Your God*; behold *Jehovah God* will come.—He shall feed his flock like a shepherd.—Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judg-

ment? Behold, the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?"—Ver 22. "It is he that sitteth on the circle of the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity."—If the supreme God is not spoken of here, where shall we find the place where he is spoken of? If it be an infinitely inferior being, where is God's distinguishing greatness, and infinitely superior magnificence? It here follows, ver. 25. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy one." A created being would not use such language, or make such a challenge. He that is created himself, would not say, as it follows in the next verse, "Lift up your eyes on high; behold, who hath created those things?" So it is evident, that it is the One only God that is spoken of, whose forerunner John was to be. Malachi iii. 1. "Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before ME. And *Jehovah*, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into his temple." Luke i. 76. "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the *Highest*, *Malak*; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his way."

§ 15. It is a great evidence that Christ is one being with the Supreme God, that the Spirit of the Supreme God is spoken of as his Spirit, proceeding from, and sent and directed by him. The Spirit by whom the prophets of old were inspired, is spoken of as the Spirit of Christ: 1 Pet. i. 11: "Searching what, or what manner of time, *the Spirit of Christ*, which was in them, did signify; when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." But it is very manifest, that thjs was the Spirit of the one only living and true God; so that we must needs understand, that the word written by the prophets, is the word of the Supreme God. See 2 Pet. i. 21. 2 Tim. iii. 16. And that they spoke by inspiration of the Spirit of the Supreme God, is manifest from Luke i. 69, 70. "And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David; as he spoke by

the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began." The word *Spirit*, in the original languages, signifies *wind*, and sometimes is used to signify *breath*. Therefore, Christ breathed on his disciples, when he would signify to them that he would give them the Holy Ghost: John xx. 22. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." This plainly teaches us that the Holy Ghost was his Spirit, as much as man's breath is his breath.

Again, it is evident, that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, as much as a person's eyes are his own eyes. Rev. v. 6. "And I beheld, and lo in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Alluding to Zech. iii. 9. "Upon one stone shall be seven eyes." But these seven eyes, in the next chapter, are spoken of as representing the Spirit of God, and the eyes of Jehovah: Chap. iv. 6. "Not by might nor power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Ver. 10. "And shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, with those seven. They are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth."

Christ is spoken of as *sending* the Holy Ghost, and *directing* him: John xvi. 7. "I will send him unto you." Ver. 13, 14, 15. "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he shall shew you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." But it is spoken of as the peculiar prerogative of God to direct his Spirit. Isai. xl. 13. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord?"*

§ 16. It is true, that creatures are sometimes called *God*. The kings and judges of God's Israel, the ancient church, are called *Gods*; but no otherwise than as types of Christ. And the angels are called *Gods*. Yet it is very remarkable, that in that only place where they are so called by God, they are commanded to *worship Christ*; and in the same verse, a curse is denounced on all such as are guilty of idolatry. Psalm xcvi. 7, compared with Heb. i. 6.

See § 8.

§ 17. God so often speaking of himself as a *jealous* God—signifying that he will by no means endure any other husband of his church—affords a clear evidence, that Jesus Christ is the same God with the Father. For Christ is often spoken of as that person who is, in the most eminent and peculiar manner, the Husband and Bridegroom of his church. That God who is the Holy One of Israel, is the husband of the church, as appears by Isaiah liv. 5. “Thy maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” Or, as the words are, “Thy Goel, the Holy One of Israel.” The goel was the near kinsman, that married the widow who had lost her husband, as appears by Ruth iii. 9—12. But this Holy One of Israel is the name of that God who is the Father, as appears by Isaiah xlix. 7. and lv. 5. and so, is the Lord of Hosts, as appears by Isaiah xliv. 6.

§ 18. Christ is the Lord, mentioned in Rom. x. 13: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” That it is Christ who is spoken of, is evident from the two foregoing verses; and also from the 14th. But the words are taken from Joel ii. 32. where the word translated Lord, is Jehovah. See also 1 Cor. i. 2.

§ 19. And 1 Cor. x. 9. “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted.” By this, it appears, that Christ was that God, that Holy One of Israel, whom they tempted in the wilderness. 1 Cor. x. 22. “Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?” It is evident, that by the Lord here, is meant Jesus Christ, as appears by the preceding context; and that therefore, He is that Being who says, “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.”

§ 20. Rev. 23. Christ says, “I am he that trieth the reins and the heart, and will give to every one of you according to his works.” This is said by the Son of God, as appears by the 18th verse foregoing. Compare this with other passages of Scripture, where those things are spoken of as the prerogative of the Supreme God. Parallel with it is John xxi. 17. “Lord, thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.”

§ 21. It would be unreasonable to suppose, that there is one Being infinitely greater than all other Beings—so that all

others are as nothing to him, and infinitely beneath him in power—and yet, that there is no kind of works or effects of his power, that is peculiar to him, by which he is greatly distinguished from others. He that appeared sitting on the throne above the cherubims and wheels in Ezekial's visions, (Ezek. i. 27. and other places), was undoubtedly Christ; because he appeared in the shape of a man, which God the Father never did. "No man hath seen God, viz. the Father, at any time:" but the person that there appeared, was undoubtedly God. He is represented as one that has heaven for his throne, and sits as Supreme Ruler of the universe.—This is undoubtedly the same that rides on the heavens in the help of his people, and in his excellency on the sky; that rides on the heaven of heavens by his name Jah, or Jehovah. And this is called the appearance of the likeness, or image of the glory of the Lord; Ezek. i. 28. iii. 23. and viii. 4. This, while it shews him to be a person truly divine, also shews him to be Christ. For what can this image of the Lord, with an appearance of brightness round about (ver. 27, 28.) be, but the same which the apostle speaks of, who is "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person?" And this is evidently the same that sat on the throne in the temple, which was called the Chariot of the Cherubims. And this person is called the God of Israel, Ezek. x. 20. and the whole that this person says to Ezekiel from time to time, shews, that he is truly God.

§ 22. It is a great evidence of the divinity of Christ, that the Holy Ghost is so put into subjection to him, as to become his messenger; even the Spirit of God, as the Holy Ghost is often called, or the Spirit of the Father, as he is called, Matt. x. 20. The same that is there called the Spirit of the Father, is in Mark xiii. 11. called the Holy Ghost.—Now, certainly, it is unreasonable to suppose, that the Spirit of the Supreme God should be put under the direction and disposal of a mere creature, one infinitely below God. The only evasion here, must be this, that the Holy Ghost is also a created spirit inferior to the Son. For if Christ be a mere creature, it would be unreasonable to suppose, that he should have the Spirit of God subjected to him, on any other supposition, whether the Spirit of God be supposed to be only the power and energy of the Most High, or a superior created Spirit. But how does the Holy Ghost, being a creature inferior to the Son, consist with Christ's being conceived by

the power of the Holy Ghost? and his being honoured by having the Holy Ghost descending upon him? and being anointed with it, and working his greatest miracles by the power of the Holy Ghost? and its being a great honour done to Christ, that the Spirit was given to him not by measure? Besides, the Holy Ghost being a creature, not only infinitely inferior to God, but inferior to the Son, is exceedingly inconsistent with almost every thing said of the Holy Spirit, in Scripture: As, his being called the Power of the Highest; his searching all things, even the deep things of God, and knowing the things of God in the most distinguishing manner, as the spirit of man within him knows the things of a man; the Scripture's being the word of God, as it is the word of the Holy Ghost; Christians being the temple of the living God, as they are the temple of the Holy Ghost; lying unto the Holy Ghost being called lying unto God; the chief works of God being ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as the works of creation, and the forming of man in the womb. (Eccles xi. 5. Job xxxiii. 4.) Giving the highest sort of wisdom, viz. spiritual understanding; forming the human nature of Christ; being the author of regeneration and sanctification; creating a new heart, and so being the Author of the new creation, which is spoken of as vastly greater than the old.

Blasphemy against the Father is pardonable; but not against the Holy Ghost. It is unreasonable to suppose that only the body of Christ was made by the Holy Ghost. It is evident, that the whole human nature, the holy thing that was born of the virgin, was by the Holy Ghost; Luke i. 35. But the Son of the virgin was a holy thing, especially with regard to his soul. The soul of Adam was from the Spirit of God, from God's breathing into him the breath of life. But this breath of life signifies the Spirit of God, as appears by Christ's breathing on his disciples after his resurrection, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Spirit of God is called the Breath of God; Job xxxiii. 4. "The Spirit of God hath made me; the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." If God's Spirit gives life to other men, or mankind in general, doubtless he gave life to Adam. And if that Spirit of God which gives life to mankind in general, be, in doing that work, called the Breath of God; we may well suppose, that when we find that which gave life and soul to Adam, called God's Breath, thereby was meant God's Spirit.

§ 23. How unreasonable must our notions be of the cre-

ation of the world, on Arian principles? For it is manifest by the Scripture, that the world was made by the Spirit of God, as well as by the Son of God. But the Son of God is, according to them, a created Spirit; and the Spirit of God must therefore also be a created Spirit inferior to him.—Therefore, we must suppose, that the Father created the world by the Son, and that the Son did not create the world by himself, but by the Spirit of God, as his minister or instrument. So that the Spirit of God herein must act as the instrument of an instrument!

§ 24. It is evident that the same Word, the same Son of God, that made the world, also upholds it in being, and governs it. This is evident, in part, unto reason. For upholding the world in being, and creating it, are not properly distinct works; since it is manifest, that upholding the world in being is the same with a *continued creation*; and consequently, that creating the world, is but the *beginning* of upholding it, if I may so say—beginning to give it a supported and dependent existence—and preservation is only continuing to give it such a supported existence. So that, truly, giving the world a being at first, no more differs from preserving it through all successive moments, than giving a being the *last* moment, differs from giving a supported being *this* moment. And the Scripture is as express, that the world is upheld by Christ, as that it was created by him; Colos. i. 16, 17. “For by Him were all things created, and by Him all things consist.” Heb. i. 2, 3. “By whom also He made the worlds, and upholding all things by the word of His power.” And it is He that shall bring the world to an end. Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. “Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth, &c. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure. As a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.”

But if these things are so, what shall we think of the upholding and government of the world, while Christ was in his humbled state, and while an infant, and when we are told that he was wearied with his journey, and his strength in some measure spent, only with governing the motions of his own body? Who upheld and governed the world at that time? Doubtless, it will be said, that God the Father took the world out of the hands of the Son for that time, to uphold and govern it, and returned it into his hands again at his

exaltation. But, is there any ground to suppose such a mighty change as this, as to the author of the universe, that it should have such different authors of its being, and of all its properties, natural principles, motions, alterations, and events, both in bodies and all created minds, for three or four and thirty years, from what it had ever before or since? Have we any hint of such a thing? or, have we any revelation of any thing analogous? Has God ever taken the work of a creature out of its hands, according to the ordinary course of things?

§ 25. The Supreme God is doubtless distinguished by some works or other. As he must be infinitely distinguished from all other beings in his *nature*; so, doubtless there are some *manifestations* or other of this vast superiority above all other beings. But we can have no other proper manifestations of the divine nature, but by some *effects* of it. The invisible things of God are seen by the things that are made. The word of God itself is no demonstration of the superior distinguishing glory of the Supreme God, any otherwise than by his works; and that two ways: 1. As we must have the perfections first proved by his works, in order to know that his word is to be depended on. 2. As the works of God, appealed to and declared in his word, make evident that divine greatness and glory which the word of God declares. There is difference between declaration and evidence. The *word* declares; but the *works* are the proper evidence of what is declared.

Undoubtedly, therefore, the vastly distinguished glory of the Supreme God, is manifested by some distinguishing peculiar works of his. That the Supreme God is distinguished very remarkably and most evidently from all other beings, by some works or other, is certain by the Scripture. It is often represented, that he most plainly and greatly shews his distinguishing majesty, power and wisdom, and vast superiority to other beings, by his works that are seen, and set in the view of the children of men. So Psalm lxxxix. 8. "Among the gods there is none like unto thee, neither are there any works like unto thy works;" see also verse 10. Psalm lxxxix. 5, 8, 9, 10. "The heavens shall praise thy wonders:—for who in heaven can be compared to the Lord? who amongst the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? O Lord of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of

the sea ; when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." Deut. iii. 24. "What God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?" Psalm lxxii. 18. "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things." This is often added to the declarations of God's works, "*That ye may know that I am the Lord, or that I am Jehovah :*" And this "*That ye may know that there is none like unto me,*" &c. Exod. viii. 10. 22. chap. ix. 14, 16. and x. 2. and innumerable other places.

§ 26. But now, what are these distinguishing works of God ? or the works by which his distinguishing dignity and glory are clearly manifested ? What works are they that can be named or thought of ? Is it CREATING the world ? Or is it the creating of the spiritual, intellectual world, which undoubtedly is an unspeakably greater work, than creating the material world ? Is it PRESERVING and upholding the world ! Or is it GOVERNING the world ? Or is it REDEMPTION and salvation ; or at least some particular great salvation ? Was it the redemption out of Egypt, and carrying the people of Israel through the wilderness, and giving them the possession of Canaan ? Or is it the greatest work of redemption, even salvation from spiritual, total and eternal destruction and bringing to eternal holiness and glory ? Is it conversion, regeneration, restoring a fallen, sinful creature, and making men new creatures, giving them holiness, and the image of God ? or giving wisdom to the heart, the truest and greatest wisdom ? Is it the conversion of the Gentile world, and renewing the whole world of mankind, as consisting of Jews and Gentiles ? Or is it conquering Satan and all the powers of darkness, and overcoming all evil, even the strongest holds of sin and Satan, all God's enemies in their united strength ? Is it searching the hearts of the children of men ? Is it working any particular kind of great miracles ? Is it raising the dead to life, or raising all in general at the last day ? Is it judging the world, angels and men in the last and greatest judgment ? Is it bestowing on the favourites of God, both men and angels, their highest, most consummate, and eternal glory ? Is it destroying the visible creation, and bringing all to their final period and consummation, and to their most perfect and eternal state ? Or, are there any other works greater than these, that can be thought of which we can find appealed to as clearly manifesting the most peculiar and distinguishing glory of the Supreme God,

in comparison of whom all other beings whatsoever are absolutely as nothing? Yet all these are ascribed to Christ?

§ 27. The *creation* of the world in general is often spoken of as the *peculiar* work of the Supreme God, a work wherein he manifests his glory as supreme, and distinguished from all other beings: Rom. i. 19, 20. "Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them. For God hath shewn it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and godhead." Doubtless it is the Supreme God who is here spoken of. And what godhead is clearly to be seen by the creation of the world, but the supreme Godhead? And what can that invisible glory and power of this God be, but that by which he is distinguished from other beings, and may be known to be what he is? It is said, "that which may be known of God, is clearly manifest by his works." But doubtless, one thing, and infinitely the most important, that may be known of God, is his supreme dignity and glory, that glory which he has as Supreme God. But if the creation of the world be not a work peculiar to him, how are these things so clearly manifested by his work? The work of creation is spoken of as one of the great wonders done by Him, who is God of Gods and Lord of Lords, who alone doth great wonders; as in Ps. cxxxvi. 2,—9. "O give thanks unto the God of Gods.—O give thanks to the Lord of Lords.—To him who alone doth great wonders.—To him that by wisdom made the heavens.—To him that stretched out the earth over the waters.—To him that made great lights,—The sun to rule by day," &c.—This is the work of the Supreme God, which he wrought *alone*, Job. ix. 8. "Which alone spreadeth out the heavens." And 2 Kings xix. 15. "O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; Thou hast made heaven and earth:" 1 Chron. xvi. 24, 25, 26. "Declare his glory among the Heathen, his marvellous works among all nations. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. He is also to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people are idols: But the Lord made the heavens"—Isaiah xl. 25, 26. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." How plain is it here, that creating the world is spoken of as a work

of the Supreme God, most evidently shewing that none is like him, or to be compared to him? So verse 12. compared with verse 18. God asserts the creation of the world to be his work, so as to deny any associate or *instrument*; as in Isaiah xlv. 24. "Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am Jehovah that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*." Isaiah xiv. 5—7. "I am Jehovah, and there is none else; there is no God besides me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the light, and create darkness." Verse 12. "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens." Verse 18. "Thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it." Verse 21. "I am Jehovah, and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me." Yet these works are applied to Christ.

§ 28. God's creating the world, is used as an argument, to shew the nations of the world the reasonableness of forsaking all other gods, and worshipping the One true God only; - Rev. xiv. 7. "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters," (See also Acts xiv. 15. and Rev. x. 6.)—The work of creation is spoken of as the distinguishing work of the Supreme only Living and True God, shewing him to be alone worthy to be worshipped; as in Jer. x. 6.—12. "Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord, Thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O king of nations? for to thee doth it appertain. Jehovah is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King.—"Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power: He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion."

§ 29. But the *creation* of the world is ascribed to JESUS CHRIST, in John i. 3. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 10. It is ascribed to him as being done by his power, as the work of his hands, Heb. i. 10. And his work in such a manner, as to be a proper mani-

festation of his greatness and glory ; and so as to shew him to be God, John i. 1—3. Is the creation of the spiritual, intelligent world, consisting of angels, and the souls of men, and the world of glory, a *peculiar* work of the Supreme God ? Doubtless it is so. Neh. ix. 6. “Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with *all their host* : And the host of heaven worshippeth Thee.” Psalm civ. 4. “Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.” And the creation of the spiritual and intelligent world, in every part of it, is also ascribed to Christ. For it is said, John i. 3. “The world was made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” And to him is expressly ascribed the creation of the invisible world, and of the angels in particular, even the very highest and most exalted of them ; and all the most glorious things in the invisible heaven, the highest and most glorious part of the creation of God. Col. i. 16. “By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible,” (these include the invisible things on earth, as well as in heaven, even the souls of men) ; “whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by him.”

§ 30. *Preserving* the creation, is spoken of as the work of the One only Jehovah, Neh. ix. 6. “Thou, even Thou, art Jehovah alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host ; the earth, and all things that are therein ; and Thou *preservest them all*.” Isa. xl. 26. “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number. He calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might ; for that he is strong in power, not one faileth.” Job xii 7—10. “But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee ; who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of Jehovah hath made this, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of a'l mankind ?” See also Psalm xxxvi. 6, 7.

But the preservation of the creation is also ascribed to Christ ; Heb. i. 3. “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power.” Colos. i. 17. “By him all things consist.”

§ 31. *Governing* the creation, is another thing often

spoken of as the *peculiar* work of God ; as in Isaiah xl. 21. to the end. There, governing the world is the manifest peculiar work of Him to whom none is like and none equal. And, in Isaiah xlv. 1—13. governing the world, bringing to pass revolutions in nations, &c.; are spoken of as the peculiar works of Him who is Jehovah alone. See 2 Chron. xxix. 11, 12.; and Psalm xxii. 28. ; xlvii. 2, &c. But Christ is often, in the New Testament, spoken of as the *Governor* of the world, is prayed to as such, and spoken of as He whose will disposes all events.

Sitting as king in heaven, having his throne there, and governing the universe for the salvation of his people, are spoken of as peculiar to the Supreme God. But, how often and eminently are these things ascribed to Christ ! His having his throne in heaven ; being exalted far above all heavens ; thrones, dominions, &c. being made subject to him ; being made Head over all things to the church, &c.

§ 32. *Judging* the world is another thing spoken of as peculiarly and distinguishingly belonging to the Supreme God.* Psalm l. 1—7. “The mighty God, even Jehovah, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Our God shall come ; a fire shall devour before him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people : And the heavens shall declare his righteousness ; for God is Judge Himself. Hear, O my people, and I will speak ; O Israel, I will testify against thee. I am God, even thy God.” This 50th Psalm begins thus: EL ELOHIM JEHOVAH, “The God of gods, Jehovah ; or the Most Mighty God, even JEHOVAH.” Who can believe that these three most magnificent names of the Deity are thus united, to signify any other than the Supreme God ?†

But it is apparent, that Christ is abundantly spoken of as eminently the Judge of all nations, of all degrees, quick and dead, angels and men. We are particularly and fully instructed, that it is his distinguishing office to judge the world, John v. 22. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Rev. xix. 11. and many other places.

* See 1 Sam. ii. 3, 10. Job xxi. 22. Psalm xi. 4, 5. lxxv. 6, 7. lxxxii. 1. 8. Judg. xi. 27. Psalm xciv. 2.

† See also Psalm ix. 7, 8, 1 Chron. xvi. 25, 26—33. Psalm xcvi. 4, 5—13. Also Psalm xcviij.

§ 33. *Destroying the world* at the consummation of all things is spoken of as a *peculiar* work of God ; Psalm cii. even of Jehovah, ver. 1, 12, 16, 18, 21, 22. ; the Creator of the world, ver 24, 25, 28. See also Psalm xcvi. 1—6. and Neh. i. 4, 5, 6. Jer. x. 6, 7, 10. Psalm xli. 6. ; civ. 32. ; cxliv. 5. Isa lxiv. 1, 2, 3 Job. ix. 4—7. But this is spoken of as the work of the *Son of God*, Heb. i. latter end.

§ 34. The wonderful *alterations* made in the *natural world*, at the coming out of Egypt ; the giving of the law, and entrance into Canaan ; are often spoken of as the *peculiar* works of God, greatly manifesting the divine majesty, as vastly distinguished from all other Gods : such as, dividing the sea ; drowning Pharaoh and his hosts there ; causing the earth to tremble, the mountains to quake at his presence, the heavens to drop, the hills to skip like rams and lambs ; Jordan being driven back ; the sun and moon standing still, &c.

But these were infinitely small things, in comparison with what shall be accomplished at the end of the world, when the mountains and hills shall be thrown into the midst of the sea ; and not only some particular mountains shall quake, but the whole earth, yea, the whole visible world, shall be terribly shaken to pieces. Not only shall Mount Sinai be on fire, as if it would melt, but all the mountains, and the whole earth and heavens shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth shall be dissolved even to its centre. And not only shall the Red Sea and Jordan be dried up for a few hours, in a small part of their channels, but all the seas, and oceans, and rivers through the world shall be dried up for ever. Not only shall the sun and moon be stopped for the space of one day ; but they, with all the innumerable mighty globes of the heavens, shall have an everlasting arrest, an eternal stop put to their courses. Instead of drowning Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, the devil and all the wicked shall be plunged into the eternal lake of fire and brimstone, &c.

The former kind of effects were but little, faint shadows of the latter. And the former are spoken of as the peculiar, manifest, glorious works of the Supreme One only God, evidently manifesting his peculiar majesty and glory. But the latter are the works of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, as is evident by Heb. i. 10—12. It is here worthy to be remarked, that—though the scripture teaches, that Christ's majesty shall at the last day appear to be so great in his coming in power and great glory, yet—it is said, when these things shall be,

God alone should be exalted, in opposition to *men* and to *other gods*, Isa. ii. 10. to the end.

§ 35. The work of *Salvation*, is often spoken of as *peculiar* to God. It is said, the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, Psal. xxxvii. 39. and that salvation belongeth unto the Lord, Psal. iii. 8. Jonah ii. 9. God's people acknowledge him to be the God of their salvation, Psal. xxv. 5. xxvii. 1. and Isa. xii. 2. Saving effectually is spoken of as his prerogative, Jer. xvii. 14. "Heal me, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise." Psal. lxxviii. 20. "He that is our God, is the God of salvation, and to the Lord our God belong the issues from death."

Salvation is spoken of as being of God, in opposition to *men*, and to all *creature* helps, Jer. iii. 23. "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." Psal. lx. 11. "Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help (Heb. salvation) of man." Ver. 16. "I Jehovah am thy Saviour." Psal. cxlvi. 3, 5. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom is no help (or salvation). Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Salvation in or by any other is denied, Isa. lix. 16. "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore, his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him."

It is spoken of as his prerogative to be the *Rock* of salvation, to be *trusted* in by men. "Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation." See Psal. xcv. 1. lxii. 2. "He *only* is my Rock, and my Salvation; he is my Defence." Ver. 5—9. "My soul, wait thou on God *alone*, for my expectation is from him. He *only* is my rock and my salvation: he is my Defence, I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; the Rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times; pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie.—To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity."*

It is said, that there is no *other Saviour* besides the One

* See Deut. xxxii. 4. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. Psal. xviii. 2. 2 Sam. xxii. 1, 2, 31, 32. Psal. xviii. 2, 30, 31, 46. Isa. xxvi. 4. Heb. i. 12.

only Jehovah; Isa. xliii. 3. "I am Jehovah thy God, the Saviour of Israel;" xliii. 11. "I, even I am Jehovah, and *besides* me there is no Saviour." See Isa. xlvii. 4. liv. 5. and xlv. 15. "O God of Israel, the Saviour." Ver. 21. to the end; "I Jehovah, and there is no God else besides me.— Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." Here observe, that this is given as a reason why all nations in the world should look to him *only* for salvation, That he *only* was God; taking it for granted, and as an universally established point, that none but *God* could be a *Saviour*. And here salvation is claimed as the prerogative of the One only God, and therefore *exclusively* of a secondary and subordinate God. It follows, "I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, In Jehovah have I righteousness and strength. Even to Him shall men come, and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Hosea xiii. 4. "Yet I am Jehovah, thy God from the land of Egypt: and thou shalt know no God but me; for there is *no Saviour besides me.*"

God is so completely the *only Saviour* of his people, that others are not admitted to partake of this honour, as mediate and subordinate saviours: Hos. i. 7. And therefore, the heavenly hosts, in giving praise to God, ascribe salvation to him, as his *peculiar* and distinguishing glory; Rev. xix. 1. "I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluja, salvation and glory, and honour and power unto the Lord our God."

§ 36. But nothing is more evident, by the express and abundant doctrine of Scripture, than that Jesus Christ is most eminently and *peculiarly* the Saviour of God's people, and the Saviour of the world. In John iv. 42. His very name is *Jesus, Saviour*. He is spoken of as the Author of eternal salvation, Heb. v. 9. And the Captain of the salvation of his people, Heb. ii. 10. a Prince and a Saviour. He is called Zion's salvation, Isa. lxii. 11. "Behold thy salvation cometh." He is spoken of, as saving by his own strength, and able to save to the uttermost; One mighty to save, and therein distinguished from all others; as in Isa. lxiii. 1. "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Ver. 5. "I looked and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none

to uphold. Therefore *mine own arm* brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me." What is said in this place, is meant of Christ, as is manifest by comparing ver. 3. with Rev. xix. 15. And the very same things that are said of Jehovah, the only God, as the only Saviour in whom men shall trust for salvation, as in Isaiah xlv. 21. to the end, are from time to time applied to Christ in the New Testament. And it is expressly said, Acts iv. 12. "There is salvation *in no other*, neither is there any other name given under heaven amongst men, whereby we must be saved." And the heavenly hosts, in their praises, ascribe salvation to Christ in like manner as to God the Father, Rev. vii. 10. "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." See also chap. v. Christ is a rock sufficiently sure, and perfectly to be trusted, Isa. xxviii. 16; 17. 1 Cor. x. 4.

§ 37. The redemption from Egypt, and bringing the children of Israel through the wilderness to the possession of Canaan, is often spoken of as a great salvation, which was most evidently the *peculiar* work of the One only Jehovah, greatly manifesting his distinguished power and majesty.—2 Sam. vii. 22, 23. "Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like thee; according to all that we have heard with our ears;" meaning what they had heard of his great fame, or the name he had obtained by his wonderful works, in bringing them out of Egypt, &c. as appears by what follows; "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things, and terrible for thy land, before thy people which thou redeemest to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?" The same work is mentioned as an evidence, that the doer of it is Jehovah, and that there is none like unto him, and as that which makes known God's name through the earth; Exod. viii. 10, 22. ix. 14, 16. and x. 2.—See also chap. xv. 6—11. xviii. 11. and xxxiv. 10. Deut. iii. 24.

§ 38. But it was Jesus Christ that wrought that salvation; Isa. lxiii. 9, 10. "The angel of his presence saved them: in his love and pity he redeemed them, and he bore them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit." This rebelling and vexing of his Holy Spirit is evidently the same thing with that spoken of,

Psalm xcvi. 8, 9, 10. "As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works. Forty years long was I grieved with that generation." But it is evident, that he whom they tempted, provoked and grieved, was that God whose great works they saw, and therefore was that God who wrought those wonderful works in Egypt and the wilderness: As is evident by the same Psalm, ver. 3. where he is called "Jehovah, a great God, and a great King above all Gods." And it is equally clear by that passage in Isa. lxiii. just quoted, that it was the *Angel of God's presence*, and by 1 Cor. x. 9. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted."

And as it is said, Isa. lxiii. that the Angel of God's presence saved them, &c. so it is plain by Exod. xxiii. 20—33. that God's Angel, a different Person from him who acts as first in the affairs of the Deity, brought them into Canaan, &c. And it is plain, that the person that appeared in the bush, who said his name was *Jehovah*, and *I am that I am*, was the Angel of Jehovah: Exod. iii. 2, 14. vi. 3. and Acts vii. 30. And nothing is more evident, by the whole history, than that the same Person brought them out of Egypt: and also, that it was the same Angel which appeared and delivered the ten commandments at Mount Sinai, conversed there with Moses, and manifested himself from time to time to the congregation in the wilderness. Acts vii 38. "This is He that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us." That angel doubtless was the same that is called the Angel of the Covenant; Mal. iii. 1. "Behold I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come into his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts:" And this messenger without doubt was Christ.—It is plain by Heb. xii. 25, 26, 27. that he who spake at Mount Sinai was Christ: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh," &c.

§ 39. Thus we see, that however the work of salvation be so often spoken of as *peculiar* to God; yet this salvation out of Egypt, so much celebrated in Scripture, is not peculiar to God the Father; but that the Son wrought this work as well as the Father. And it is true, that the Scriptures

abundantly speak of an infinitely greater and more glorious salvation than that out of Egypt; viz. the salvation of men from sin, Satan, eternal death and ruin, and bringing them to the heavenly Canaan, to eternal life and happiness there. This is spoken of as a far greater work than the other. So that, in comparison of it, it is not worthy to be remembered or mentioned. Jer. xx. 6—8. "It shall no more be said the Lord liveth, &c.;" see also chap. xvi. 14, 15. Isaiah xliii. 18—21. "Remember ye not the former things," &c. But I need not stop to shew the reader how this great salvation is in Scripture ascribed in a *peculiar* manner to *Christ* as the author.

§ 40. We read in Scripture of two *creations*: The *first*, that which Moses gives an account of in the first chapter of Genesis; the *other*, a spiritual creation, consisted in restoring the moral world, bringing it to its highest perfection, and establishing it in its eternal felicity and glory; and the latter is spoken of as most incomparably the greatest work; Isaiah lxxv. 17, 18. and lxxvi. 22. Now, as creation is so much spoken of as a most peculiar work of the Supreme God, one may well determine, that if the first creation be not so, yet the second is, which is so much greater, and evidently the greatest of all God's works.

But this new creation, which is the same with the work of redemption, is, in the most especial manner, spoken of as the work of Jesus: for he is ever mentioned as the great Redeemer and Restorer. This work is committed to him: for this he has a full commission. It is left in his hands; all things are committed to him; all power in heaven and in earth is given him, that he may accomplish this work, and bring it to its most absolute perfection. To this end are subjected to him, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, and he is made Head over all things; and to this end, the world to come, that is, all the affairs of that new creation, are put in subjection unto him: And he, with regard to all the transactions belonging to this new creation, that are written in the book of God, is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. Christ built the house; he built all things, especially in this new creation; and therefore is God. These things are plainly asserted in Heb. iii. 3, 4. "For this man (rather, this *person*) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, in as much as he who hath builded the house, hath

more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man: but he that built all things is God."—Thus, the work of redemption, which is both the greatest work of salvation, and the greatest work of creation, (the two kinds of works chiefly spoken of in Scripture as divine), is accomplished by the Son of God.

§ 41. The giving of spiritual and saving *light* is one chief part of the new creation, as creating the light was a chief part of the old creation. The causing of this spiritual light is spoken of as the *peculiar* work of God. 2 Cor. iv. 6. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," &c. But the giving of this light is especially ascribed to Christ, as the Author and Fountain of it. He is called the Light of the world; the Light of life; the true Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He is the Sun of Righteousness. No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him, &c.

§ 42. So calling men into Christ's fellowship and kingdom, is also ascribed to God. Rom. viii. 30. "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called." Acts ii. 39. "As many as the Lord our God shall call." 1 Cor. i. 9. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Thess. ii. 12. "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory." 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation; whereunto He called you by our gospel." 2 Tim. i. 9. "According to the power of God, who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace." 1 Pet. v. 10. "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory."

But this is ascribed to Jesus Christ. Rom. i. 6. "Among whom also ye are the called of Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. vii. 17. "As the Lord hath called every one." John x. 3. "And he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out." Verse 16. "Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring in; and they shall hear my voice." Eph. i. 18. "That ye may know what is the hope of His calling."

§ 43. *Regeneration*, or the changing and renewing of the heart, is spoken of as the peculiar work of God. John i. 13. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." James i. 18. "Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

It is likewise ascribed to Christ. Saints are born of Him in their spiritual generation, and therefore are called His seed; Gal. iii. 29. It is Christ that baptizes men with the Holy Ghost, which is called the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and a being born of water and of the Spirit. Christ sanctifies and cleanses the souls of men, by the washing of water, by the word; Eph. v. 26.

§ 44. *Justification*, washing from sin, delivering from guilt, forgiving sin, admitting to favour and to the glorious benefits of righteousness in the sight of God, are often spoken of as belonging peculiarly to God. Rom. iii. 26. "That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Verse 30. "Seeing it is one God that justifieth," &c. Chap. viii. 30. "Whom he called, he also justified." Verse 33. "It is God that justifieth." Isaiah xliii. 25. "I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." Psalm li. 2—4. "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin: against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." Therefore the Jews said, Luke v. 21. "Who can forgive sins but God only?"

But Christ hath power to forgive sins, as it follows in the last mentioned place; verse 24. "But that ye may know, that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," &c. He washes us from our sins in his own blood; Rev. i. 5. And he justifies those that know and believe in him. Isaiah liii. 11.

§ 45. *Overcoming Satan*, and delivering men from him, and giving his people victory over him, are spoken of as the peculiar works of God's glorious power. Isaiah xxvii. 1. "In that day, Jehovah, with his great and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan, that crooked serpent; he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." Psalm viii. 1, 2. "O Jehovah, our God, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens! Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger."

But it is the special work of Christ to bruise the serpent's head ; to destroy the works of the devil ; and that by his own strength. For he is represented as conquering him, because he is stronger than the strong man armed, and so overcoming him and taking from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and spoiling his goods. It is He that has spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them. He is the spiritual Samson, that has rent the roaring lion as he would have rent a kid ; and the spiritual David, that has delivered the lamb out of his mouth, and has slain that great Goliah. He is that Michael who fights with the dragon and casts him out ; and at last will judge Satan, and will utterly destroy him ; and will inflict those everlasting torments on him spoken of in Rev. xx. 10. In the apprehension of which he now trembles, and trembled for fear that Christ would inflict those torments on him, when he cried out and fell down before him, saying, " Art Thou come to torment me before the time ? " And " I beseech Thee, torment me not."

§ 46. Should any imagine, that those parts of the work of redemption, which are initial, and are wrought in this world, being more imperfect, may be wrought by the Son of God ; but that the more glorious perfection of it, which is brought to pass in heaven, is peculiar to God the Father : In opposition to this, it may be observed, it belongs to Christ to take care of the souls of his saints after death ; to receive them to the heavenly state ; and to give them possession of heaven. Therefore the Scriptures represent, that he redeems his saints to God, and makes them kings and priests. He has the key of David, the key of the palace, and the keys of Hades, or the separate state, and of death ; and opens, and no man shuts ; and shuts, and no man opens. He is gone to heaven as the forerunner of the saints. He has, in their name, taken possession of that inheritance which he has purchased for them, that he may put them in possession of it in due time. He is gone to prepare a place for them, that he may come and take them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also ; and make them sit with him in his throne. And therefore Stephen, when dying, commended his spirit into Christ's hands.

Or, if any shall say, that the far more glorious salvation which shall be effected at the end of the world, when all things shall be brought to their highest consummation, shall

be the peculiar work of God the Father : I answer, It is abundantly manifest from Scripture, that the consummation of all things shall be by Christ. He shall raise the dead by his voice, as one that has power and life in himself. He shall raise up the bodies of his saints in their glorious resurrection, making their bodies like to his glorious body ; John. v. 25, 29, and vi. 39, 40. He, as the universal and final Judge, shall fully put all things to rights ; and bring every thing to its last and most perfect state. He shall bestow that great gift of eternal life, in both soul and body, on the whole church, and every individual member in a state of most consummate glory, which is the thing aimed at in all the preceding steps of the great affair of redemption. He shall present his church to Himself and to his Father a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; all in perfect purity, beauty, and glory : and the glory which God hath given him he will give them, in the most perfect manner, that they may reign with him for ever and ever. And thus, he will cause the new Jerusalem to appear in its brightest glory, as a bride adorned for her husband ; and will perfect the new creation, and cause the new heavens and new earth to shine forth in their consummate and eternal beauty and brightness ; when God shall proclaim, *It is done* ; I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last*. Christ is represented as being himself the light and glory that enlightens the New Jerusalem, that fills with brightness and glory the church of God, in its last, consummate, and eternal glory ; Rev. xxi. 23.

§ 47. Concerning the name JEHOVAH, see Neh. ix. 6 ; “Thou art *Jehovah alone* : Thou hast made heaven and earth ; the heaven of heavens, with all their host ; the earth,” &c. Deut. vi. 4. “Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one *Jehovah*.” 2 Sam. xxii. 32. “Who is God, save *Jehovah* ? who is a Rock, save our God ? So Psal. xviii. 31. 1 Kings xvii. 39. “*Jehovah*, he is the God : *Jehovah*, he is the God :” When God proclaimed his name in Mount Sinai, Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6. “He passed by and proclaimed, *Jehovah*, *Jehovah*.” Jer. x. 10.” “*Jehovah* is the True God ; he is the Living God, and an Everlasting King.” Exod. xv. 11. “Who is like unto Thee, O *Jehovah* ?” 1 Chron xvii. 20. “O *Jehovah*, there is none like unto Thee.” Psal. lxxxvi. 8. It might

* John xi. 25. and v. 22, 23, 27 ; Eph. v. 20. , 1 Cor. xv. 20,—28. Matt. xxv. 34. ; 2 Tim. iv. 8. ; Luke xxii. 29, 33. ; Matt. xxiv. 47. ; Rev. ii. 7, 10. ; and iii. 21. ; Rev. xviii. 11, 17.

well be expected, that, in that abundant revelation which God has made of himself, he would make himself known by some one name at least, which should be expressly delivered as the peculiar and distinguishing name of the Most High. And we find it to be so: God has, with great solemnity, declared a certain name as his most peculiar name; which he has expressly and very often spoken of as a name that belongs to him in a most distinguishing manner, and belongs to the Supreme Being only; and hath expressly asserted that it belongs to no other. But, notwithstanding all this, the Arians, to serve their particular purpose, reject this name, as not the distinguishing name of the Supreme God.

§ 48. *King of kings* and *Lord of lords*, are titles peculiar to the Supreme Being. Deut. x. 17. "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and the Lord of lords." Psal. cxxxvi. 3. "O give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his mercy endureth for ever." Dan. ii. 47. "Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods, and Lord of kings." 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15, 16. "Until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting, Amen." Rev. xix. 11—16. "He whose name is called the *Word of God*, hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS."

§ 49. *Christ's eternity* is abundantly asserted. Psal. cii. 24—27. "Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Rom. i. 23. "The incorruptible God." 1 Tim. vi. 16. "The King eternal, immortal." Rev. iv. 9, 10. v. 14. x. 5, 6. and xv. 7. Heb. vii. 3. "Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life."

§ 50. There must be a vast difference, not only in the degree, but in the kind, of respect and worship due to the Supreme God as well as in other things; since there is so infinite a difference between this Being and all others. There is a great difference as to the kind of respect proper for a wife to render to her husband, and that which it is proper for her to render towards other men. So it is with regard to the

respect due to God; otherwise there would not be a foundation for that *jealousy*, which God exercises on occasion of his professing people worshipping other beings.

In addition to what has been observed of the *works* and *worship* of God, the following sayings of Christ are worthy to be observed. John v. 17. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Ver. 19. "What things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise." Ver. 23. "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." It is plain, God is *jealous* in that respect, that no other being may share with him in honour, that he alone may be exalted. It is expected that other beings should humble themselves, should be brought low, should deny themselves for God, and esteem themselves as nothing before him. And as he requires that they should abase themselves, he would not set up others to exalt them to a rivalship with himself. If men may pray to Christ, may adore him, give themselves up to him, trust in him, praise him, and serve him; what kind of worship is due to the Father, entirely distinct from all this in nature and kind?

When Satan tempted Christ to fall down and worship him, as one that had power to dispose of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; Christ replies, "It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But the Arians must suppose, that we are required to worship and serve some other being than this Lord God which Christ speaks of, as the disposer not only of the kingdoms of this world, but of the kingdom of heaven and the glory thereof. On the supposition of Christ's being merely a creature, he would much more properly be ranked with creatures exclusively, and never with God, (as being called by his names and titles, having ascribed to him his attributes, dominions, &c.) However great a *creature* he might be, he would be infinitely below God.

§ 51. Concerning the grand *objection* from that text, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, nor the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father:" I would observe, that even the Arians themselves, with regard to some things said of Christ, must make the distinction between his power or knowledge, as to his inferior and his superior nature; or, if they do not allow two natures, then, at least, as to his humbled state, and his state both before and after his humiliation: As Mark vii. 24. "And would have no man know it, but he

could not be hid." This cannot mean that the person who created the whole world, visible and invisible, &c. and by whom all things consist and are governed, had not *power* to order things so, that he might be hid.

§ 52. It is observable, that Christ is frequently called *God* absolutely, θεός; and ἰθεός; by which name even the heathens themselves always understood the Supreme God. Dr. CUDWORTH, in his "Intellectual System," abundantly shews, that the heathens generally worshipped but one supreme, eternal, universal, uncreated, Deity; but that their best philosophers maintained, that this deity subsisted in three hypostases: though they had many created gods. And in page 627, he says, "It now appears, from what we have declared, that as to the ancient and genuine Platonists and Pythagoreans, none of their trinity of Gods, or divine hypostases, were independent, so, neither were they creature-gods, but uncreated, they being all of them not only eternal, and necessarily existent and immutable, but also universal, *i. e.* infinite and omnipotent causes, principles, and creators of the whole world. From whence it follows, that these Platonists could not justly be taxed with idolatry, in giving religious worship to each hypostasis of their trinity. And one grand design of Christianity being to abolish the Pagan idolatry or creature worship, it cannot justly be charged therewith, from that religious worship given to our Saviour Christ and the Holy Ghost, they being none of them, according to the true and orthodox Christianity, creatures, however the Arian hypothesis made them such. And this was indeed the grand reason why the ancient fathers so zealously opposed Arianism. We shall cite a remarkable passage out of Athanasius, fourth oration against the Arians, to this purpose, as follows:

"Why, therefore, do not these Arians, holding this, reckon themselves amongst the Pagans or Gentiles, since they do, in like manner, worship the creature *besides* the Creator? τη κήσει λατρευσι παρα τον κήσαντα." Athanasius's meaning here, could not well be, that they worshipped the creature *more* than the Creator; forasmuch as the Arians constantly declared that they gave less worship to the Son than to the Father.

"For though the Pagans worship one uncreated, and many created gods; but these Arians only one uncreated, and one created, to wit, the Son, or Word of God; yet will not this make any real difference betwixt them; because the

Arians' one created god, is one of those many Pagan gods; and these many gods of the Pagans or Gentiles have the same nature with this one, they being alike creatures."

§ 53. It is remarkable, that in so many places, both in the Old Testament and New, when Christ is spoken of, his glory and prerogatives represented, and the respect due to him urged, that the vanity of idols in the same places should be represented, and idolatry warned against. See Psal. xvi. 4. It is manifest, that it is the Messiah that there speaks.— See also many prophecies of Isaiah and other prophets, 1 John v. 20, 21. 1 Cor. x. 19—22.

"There is not the least intimation, where Christ is styled *God*, either in the texts themselves, or contexts, that this is to be understood of his *office*, and not of his *person*; as is the case where magistrates are styled Gods, where the very next words explain it, and tell us what is to be understood by it. And when Moses and angels are called Gods, no one who attends to the whole discourse, could easily mistake the meaning, and not see that this term *God* was there used in an inferior and metaphorical sense." Letter to the Dedicator of Mr. Emlyn's Inquiry, &c. p. 7, 8. Matt. xix. 17. "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God." "Mr. Emlyn affirms it to be evident, that Christ here distinguishes himself from God, and denies of himself what he affirms of God. But the truth of his interpretation entirely depends upon the *opinion* which the young man had of Christ, who received this answer from him." Ibid. p. 17, 18.

§ 54. That Christ had divine omniscience, appears from his own words; Rev. ii. 23. "And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the hearts and the reins." Now Solomon declares, 1 Kings viii. 39. "Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." And Jer. xvii. 10. God says, "I, the Lord, search the heart; I try the reins." And Christ does not say, The churches shall know that I search the reins and the heart; but that "I am HE," &c. which, if words have any force in them, yea, if the expression is not altogether unintelligible, implies, "I am He who is distinguished by this character; or the churches shall know that I am the God who searcheth," &c. Ibid. p. 43, 44.

§ 55. That the eternal Logos should be subordinate to the Father, though not inferior in nature; yea, that Christ, in his *office*, should be subject to the Father, and less than He, though in his higher nature not inferior, is not strange. It is proper, among mankind, that a son should be subordinate to his father, yea, subject in many respects, though of the same human nature; yea, though in no respect inferior in any natural qualification. It was proper that Solomon should be under David his father, and be appointed king by him, and receive charges and directions from him, though, even then, in his youth, probably not inferior to his father.

The disciples of Christ, or those that trusted in him, when here on earth, applied to him as trusting in his ability, not only to heal all diseases of body, and to raise the dead; but as leaving their souls in his hands, and being able to heal the diseases of their minds; as being the Author and Fountain of virtue. So Luke xvii. 5. "The apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith." So the father of the demoniac, Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

§ 56. It is a good argument for Christ's divinity, that he is to be the Author of the resurrection. The atoms and particles in one little finger, are capable of so many removes, and such dispersions, that I believe it would surpass any finite understanding, at two or three thousand years end, to tell what distinct particles of the universe belonged to it. It would require a vast strength and subtlety of mind, to trace but one atom so nicely, as to know that individual atom in the universe, after so long a time; after it had been a particle of air, water, oil, or animal spirit, &c. and had been transported with prodigious swiftness from place to place, backwards and forwards, millions of times amongst innumerable others of the same kind. Especially, would it be exceeding difficult, so narrowly to watch two of such at once. If so, what would it be, to follow every atom in a man's body; yea, of all the bodies that ever have died, or shall die? And, at the same time, to have the mind exercised with full vigour upon innumerable other matters, that require an equal strength of understanding? and all this with such ease, that it shall be no labour to the mind?

§ 57. God would not have given us any person to be our Redeemer, unless he was of divine and absolutely Supreme dignity and excellency, or was the Supreme God; lest we

should be under temptation to pay him too great respect ; lest, if he were not the Supreme God, we should be under temptation to pay him that respect which is due only to the Supreme, and which God, who is a jealous God, will by no means allow to be paid to an inferior being. Men are very liable to be tempted to rate those too highly, from whom they have received great benefits. They are prone to give them that respect and honour, that belongs to God only. Thus, the Gentile world deified and adored such of their kings as did great things for them, and others from whom they received great benefits. So Cornelius was tempted to give too great respect to Peter, he being the person that God had marked out to be his teacher and guide in things pertaining to eternal salvation. So the apostle John could scarce avoid adoring the angel that shewed him those visions : he fell down to worship him once and again. Though the first time he had been strictly warned against it; yet the temptation was so great, that he did it again : Rev. xix. 10. ; xxii. 8. This being a temptation they were so liable to, was greatly disallowed of by God. When Cornelius fell down before Peter, he took him up, saying, “ Stand up ; I myself also am a man.” So, when the people at Lystra were about to offer divine worship to Paul and Barnabas, when they heard of it, they rent their clothes, and ran in among them, crying out, “ Sirs, why do ye these things ? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein ;” Acts xiv. And when John was about to adore the angel, how strictly was he warned against it ? “ See thou do it not,” says he, “ for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, that have the testimony of Jesus Christ : worship God.” And God has always been so careful to guard against it, that he hid the body of Moses, that it might be no temptation to idolatry. But if any thing can be a temptation to give supreme respect and honour to one that is not the supreme being, this would be a temptation, viz. to have a person that is not the supreme being, to be our redeemer ; to have such an one endure such great sufferings out of love to us, and thereby to deliver us from such extreme and eternal misery, and to purchase for us so great and eternal happiness. God therefore, in wisdom, has appointed such a Person to be our Redeemer, that is of absolutely supreme glory and excellency, that we may be in no danger of loving and adoring him too much ; that we may

prize him, exalt him for the great things that he has done for us, as much as we will, nay so far as his love to us, his sufferings for us, and the benefits we receive by him, can tempt us to, without danger of exceeding. Christ has done as great things for us as ever the Father did. His mercy and love, have been as great and wonderful; and we receive as much benefit by them, as we do by the love and mercy of the Father. The Father never did greater things for us than to redeem us from hell, and bring us to eternal life. But if Christ had not been a Person equal with the Father, and worthy of our equal respect, God would not have so ordered it, that the temptation to love and respect the Son, which results from favours that we have by kindness received, should be equal with the inducements we have to love and respect the Father.

§ 58. I shall offer some reasons against DR. WATTS'S notion of the pre-existence of Christ's Human Soul. If the pre-existing soul of Christ created the world, then, doubtless, he upholds and governs it. The same Son of God that did one, does the other. He created all things, and by Him all things consist. And if so, how was his dominion confined to the Jewish nation, before his incarnation, but extends to all nations since? Besides, there are many things ascribed in the Old Testament to the Son of God, in those very places, which Dr. Watts himself supposes to speak of Him, that imply his government of the whole world, and all nations. The same person that is spoken of as King of Israel, is represented as the Governor of the world.

According to this scheme, the greatest of the works of the Son in his created nature, implying the greatest exaltation, was His first work of all; viz. His creating all things, all worlds, all things visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: and this before ever he had any trial at all of his obedience, &c. At least, this work seems much greater than judging the world at the Last Day; which the Scripture often speaks of as one of the highest parts of his exaltation, which he has in reward for his obedience and sufferings: And Dr. Wats himself supposes his honours, since his humiliation, to be much greater than before,

§ 59. On this scheme, it will follow, that the covenant of redemption was made with a person that was not *sui juris*, and not at liberty to act his own mere good pleasure, with respect

to undertaking to die for sinners; but was obliged to comply, on the first intimation that it would be well-pleasing to God, and a thing that he chose.

§ 60. According to that scheme, the man Christ Jesus was not properly the son of the virgin, and so the son of man. To be the son of a woman, is to receive being in both soul and body, in consequence of a conception in her womb. The soul is the principal part of the man; and sonship implies derivation of the soul as well as the body, by conception. Though the soul is no part of the mother, and be immediately given by God, yet that hinders not its being derived by conception; it being consequent on it, according to a law of nature. It is agreeable to a law of nature, that where a perfect human body is conceived in the womb of a woman, and properly nourished and increased, a human soul should come into being: and conception may as properly be the cause whence it is derived, as many other natural effects are derived from natural causes or antecedents. For it is the power of God which produces these effects, though it be according to an established law. The soul being so much the principal part of man, a derivation of the soul by conception, is the chief thing implied in a man's being the son of a woman.

According to what seems to be Dr. Watts's scheme, the Son of God is no distinct divine Person from the Father. So far as He is a divine Person. He is the same Person with the Father. So that, in the covenant of redemption, the Father covenants with himself, and He takes satisfaction of himself, &c. Unless you will say, that one nature covenanted with the other; the two natures in the same person covenanted together, and one nature in the same person, took satisfaction of the other nature in the same person. But how does this confound our minds, instead of helping our ideas, or making them more easy and intelligible!

§ 61. The Son of God, as a distinct Person, was from eternity. It is said, Mic. v. 2. "His goings forth were of old, from everlasting." So Prov. viii. 23. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." So he is called, Isaiah ix. 6. "The everlasting Father." I know of no expressions used in Scripture, more strong, to signify the eternity of the Father himself.

Dr. Watts supposes the world to be made by the pre-existent soul of Christ; and thinks it may properly be so said, though the knowledge and power of this pre-existent soul could not extend to the most minute parts, every atom, &c. —But it is evidently the design of the Scripture to assure us, that Christ made all things whatever, in the absolute universality, John i. 33. “All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Col. i. 16, 17. “For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” Now, if we suppose matter to be infinitely divisible, it will follow, that let His wisdom and power be as great as they will, if finite, but a few of those individual things that are made, were the effects of his power and wisdom: yea, that the number of the things that were made by Him, are so few, that they bear no proportion to others, that did not immediately fall under His notice; or that of the things that are made there are ten thousand times, yea infinitely more, not made by Him, than are made by Him:—And so, but infinitely few of their circumstances are ordered by His wisdom.

It is said, Heb. ii. 8. “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under him.” Here it is represented, that God the Father has put every individual thing under the power and government of another person, distinct from Himself. But this cannot be true of the human soul of Christ, as it must be according to Dr. Watts’s scheme, let the powers of that be never so great, if they are not infinite. For things and circumstances, and dependencies and consequences of things in the world, are infinite in number; and therefore a finite understanding and power cannot extend to them: yea, it can extend to but an infinitely small part of the whole number of individuals, and their circumstances and consequences. Indeed, in order to the disposal of a few things, in their motions and successive changes, to a certain precise issue, there is need of infinite exactness, and so need of infinite power and wisdom.

§ 62 The work of creation, and so the work of upholding all things in being, can, in no sense, be properly said to be the work of any *created* nature. If the created nature

gives forth the word, as Joshua did, when he said, "Sun, stand thou still;" yet it is not that created nature that does it: That being that depends himself on creating power, does not properly do any thing towards creation, as Joshua did nothing towards stopping the sun in his course. So that it cannot be true in Dr. Watts's scheme, that that Son of God, who is a distinct person from God the Father, did at all, in any manner of propriety, *create* the world, nor does he uphold it or govern it. Nor can those things that Christ often says of himself be true: as "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work."—"Whatsoever the Father doth, those doth the Son likewise," John v. 17, 19.; it being very evident, that the works of creating and upholding and governing the world are ascribed to the Son, as a distinct Person from the Father.

§ 63. Not only is the word *Elohim* in the plural number, but it is joined to a verb of the plural number, in Gen. xx. 13. *When God caused me to wander from my Father's house.* The word *Hightnu*, *caused to wander*, is in the plural number. This is agreeable to the use of plural verbs, adjectives and pronouns, in Gen. i. 26.; iii. 22.; xi. 7. See other instances in Gen. xxxv. 7.; Exodus xxxii. ii. 4.; compared with Neh. ix. 18.; Isaiah xvi. 6.

The very frequent joining of the word *Elohim*, a word in the plural number, with the word *Jehovah*, a word in the singular number, (as may be seen in places referred to in the English concordance, under the words, Lord God, Lord his God, Lord my God, Lord our God, Lord their God, Lord thy God, Lord your God), seems to be a significant indication of the union of several divine persons in one essence. The word *Jehovah* signifies as much as the word *Essence*, and is the proper name of God with regard to his self-existent, eternal, all-sufficient, perfect, and immutable Essence. Moses seems to have regard to something remarkable in thus calling *Elohim*, the plural, so often by the singular name, *Jehovah*; especially in that remark which he makes for the special observation of God's people Israel, in Deut. vi. 4. "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord." In the original, it is *Jehovah Elohenu Jehovah Ehadh*; the more proper translation of which is, *Jehovah our God is one Jehovah*. The verb is understood, and properly inserted between *Jehovah Elohenu* and *Jehovah Ehadh*, thus, *Jehovah Elohenu is Jehovah Ehadh*; which, if most literally translated, is thus, *Jehovah Our divine Persons is one Jehovah*: as though Moses, in this remark,

had a particular reference to the word *Elohim* being in the plural number, and would guard the people against imagining from thence that there was a plurality of Essences or Beings, among whom they were to divide their affections and respect.

A farther confirmation, that the name *Elohim*, when used as the name of the True God, signifies some plurality, is, that this same name is commonly, all over the Hebrew bible, used to signify the gods of the Heathens, when many gods are spoken of. See those places in the Hebrew bible, which are referred to in the English concordance, under the word *Gods*. In Exodus xx. 2, 3. when it is said in the third verse, "Thou shalt have no other GODS before Me." The word is the same as in the foregoing verse, where it is said, "I am the Lord thy GOD, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." It is *Elohim* in both verses: I am the Jehovah, thy *Elohim*: Thou shalt have no other *Elohim*. Yet the latter *Elohim* is joined with an adjective of the plural number; which seems naturally to lead the children of Israel, to whom God spake these words, to suppose a plurality in the *Elohim* which brought them out of Egypt, implied in the name *Jehovah*. Ps. lviii. 11. "Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth; *Elohim* Shophetim." Which literally is, *Elohim*, judges, (in the plural number). See the evident distinction made between Jehovah *sending*, and Jehovah *sent* to the people, and dwelling in the midst of them, in Zech. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11. and iv. 8, 9, 11. "For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, After the glory hath He *sent* me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye." "For behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me." "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord." "And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath *sent* me unto thee." "Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts has *sent* me unto you." "Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?" Joshua xxiv. 19. "And Joshua said unto the people,

Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is an Holy God, Elohim Kedhoshim." *He is the Holy Gods.* Not only is the word *Elohim* properly plural, the very same that is used, ver. 15. the Gods which your fathers served, &c.—but the adjective *Holy* is plural. A plural substantive and adjective are used here concerning the True God, just in the same manner as in 1 Sam. 4, 8. "Who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods." And in Dan iv. 8. "In whom is the Spirit of the Holy Gods." So ver. 9, 18. and chap. v. 11. that the plural number should thus be used with the epithet *Holy*, agrees well with the doxology of the angels, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts," &c.—Isaiah vi. and Rev. iv.

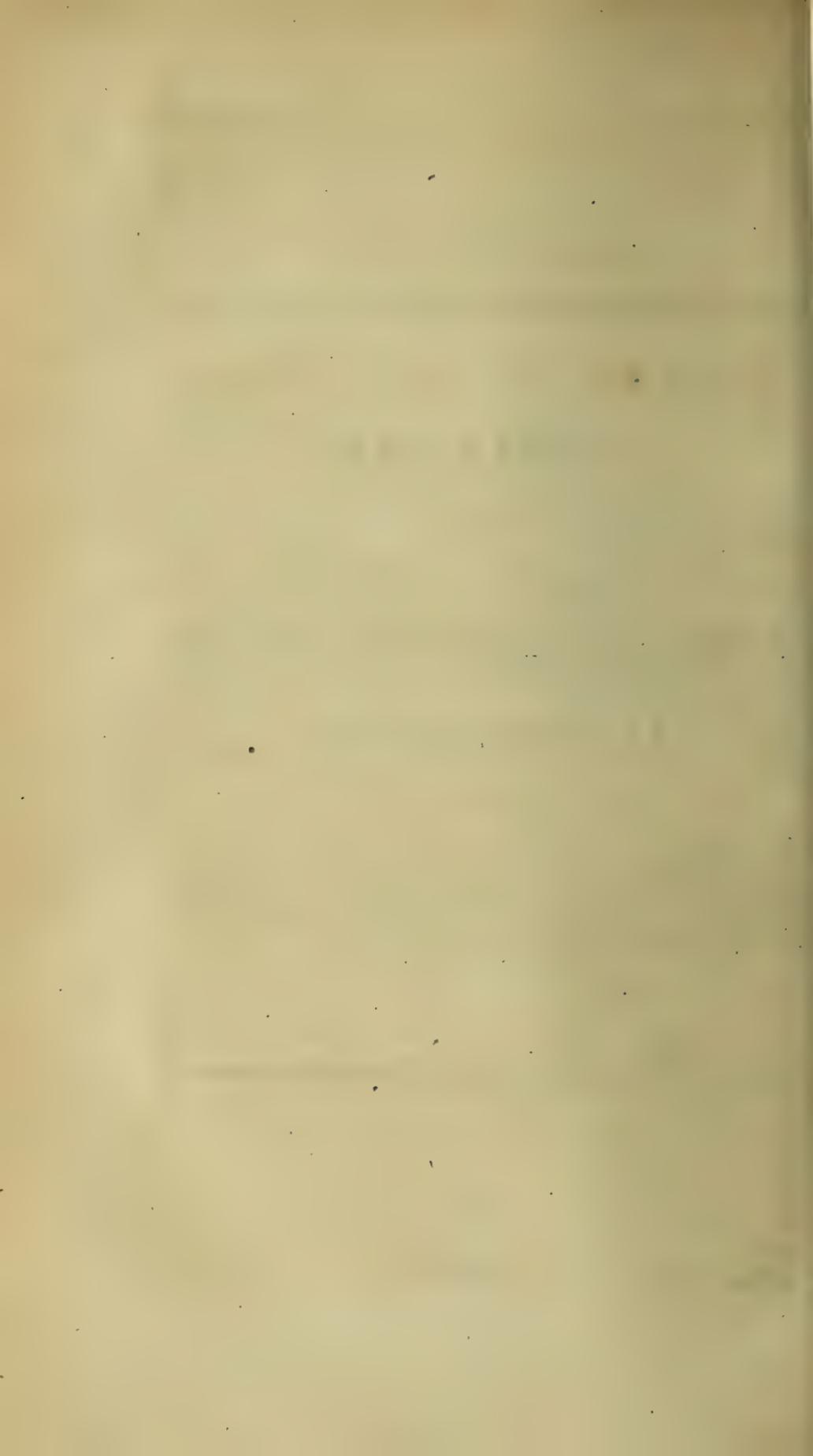
§ 64. It is an argument, that the Jews of old understood that there were several persons in the Godhead, and particularly, that when the cherubim, in the 6th of Isaiah, cried, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts," they had respect to three persons: That the Seventy interpreters, in several places, where the Holy One of Israel is spoken of, use the plural number; as in Isaiah xli. 16. "Thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel;" in the LXX, it is, *ευφρανθηση εν τοις αγιωις Ισραηλ.* Isaiah lx. 14. "The Zion of the Holy One of Israel;" it is *σιων αγιωων Ισραηλ.* So Jer. li. 5. "Filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel;" *απω των αγιωων Ισραηλ.*

REMARKS

ON

IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES.

THE greatest part of these REMARKS are original, and may be considered as a Second Volume of PRESIDENT EDWARDS'S Miscellaneous Observations; but, as they relate to Subjects entirely different, make by themselves a Book.



MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS.

ON

IMPORTANT DOCTRINES.

CHAP. I.

CONCERNING GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT, A FUTURE STATE,
AND THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

SECT. I.

THE Creator of the world, is doubtless also the Governor of it. He that had power to give being to the world, and set all the parts of it in order, has doubtless power to dispose of the world, to continue the order he has constituted, or to alter it. He that first gave the laws of nature, must have all nature in his hands: So that it is evident God has the world in his hands, to dispose of as he pleases. And, as God is able, so he is inclined, to govern the world. For, as he is an intelligent being, he had some end in what he did, otherwise he did not act as a voluntary agent in making the world. That being never acts voluntarily, that has no end in what he does, and aims at nothing at all in it. Neither God nor man is properly said to make any thing that necessarily or accidentally proceeds from them, but that only which is voluntarily produced. Besides, we see in the particular parts of the world, that God had a particular end in their formation. They are fitted for such an end. By which it appears, that the Creator did act as a voluntary agent, proposing final causes in the work of creation: And he that made the particular parts for certain ends, doubtless made the whole for a certain end. And, if God

made the world for some end, doubtless he will choose to have this world disposed of to answer that end. For his proposing the end, supposes, that he chooses it should be obtained. Therefore, it follows, that God will choose to take care that the world be disposed of to the obtaining of his own ends, which is the same thing as his choosing to have the government of the world. And it is manifest, in fact, that God is not careless how the affairs and concerns of the world he has made proceed, because he was not careless of this matter in the creation itself; as it is apparent, by the manner and order in which things were created, that God, in creating, took care of the future progress and state of things in the world. This being established, I now proceed to show, that it must be, that God maintains a moral government over the world of mankind.

§ 2. If it be certain, that God is concerned, and does take care how things proceed in the state of the world he has made, then he will be especially concerned how things proceed in the state of the world of mankind. Mankind are the principal part of the visible creation. They have understanding, are voluntary agents, and can produce works of their own will, design and contrivance, as God does. And the Creator looks upon them as the principal part of his visible creation, as is manifest, because he hath set them at the head of his creation. The world is evidently made to be an habitation for man, and all things about him are subordinated to his use. Now, if God be careful how the world that he has made be regulated, that his end may be answered, and that it may not be in vain, he will be especially careful of this concerning the principal part of it, and in the same proportion that it is principal or superior in his own account to the rest. The more God has respect to any part of the world he has made, the more concerned he will be about the state of that part. But, it is manifest by the creation itself, that God has more respect or regard to man, than to any other part of the visible creation; because he has evidently made and fitted other parts to man's use. And therefore God will not leave the world of mankind to themselves, without taking any care to govern and order their state. It is evident, by the manner in which God has formed and constituted other things, that has respect to beauty, good order and regulation, proportion and harmony; so, in the system of the world, in the seasons of the year, in the formation of plants, and of the various parts of the human body.

Surely, therefore, he will not leave the principal part of the creation, about the state of which he is evidently, in fact, chiefly concerned, without making any proper provision for its being in any other than a state of deformity, discord, and the most hateful and dreadful confusion.

§ 3. By what has been already said, God is most concerned about the state and government of that which is highest in his creation, and which he values most; and so he is principally concerned about the ordering the state of mankind, which is a part of the creation that he has made superior, and that he values most: And therefore, in like manner, it follows, that he is principally concerned about the regulation of that which he values most in men, viz. what appertains to his intelligence and voluntary acts. If there be any thing in the principal part of the creation, that the Creator values more than other parts, it must be that wherein it is above them, or, at least, something wherein it differs from them. But the only thing wherein men differ from the inferior creation, is intelligent perception and action. This is that in which the Creator has made man to differ from the rest of the creation, and by which he has set him over it, and by which he governs the inferior creatures, and uses them for himself; and therefore, it must needs be, that the Creator should be chiefly concerned, that the state of mankind should be regulated according to his will, with respect to what appertains to him as an intelligent, voluntary creature. Hence, it must be, that God does take care, that a good moral government should be maintained over men; that his intelligent, voluntary acts should be all subject to rules; and that with respect to them all, he should be the subject of judicial proceeding. For unless this be, there is no care taken, that the state of mankind, with respect to their intelligent, voluntary acts, should be regulated at all; but all things will be remedilessly in the utmost deformity, confusion and ruin. The world of mankind, instead of being superior, will be the worse, and more hateful, and the more vile and miserable, for having the faculties of reason and will; and this highest part of the creation will be the lowest, and infinitely the most confused, deformed, and detestable, without any provision for rectifying its evils. And the God of order, peace and harmony, that constituted the inferior parts of the world, which he has subjected to man, and made subservient to him, in such decency, beauty and harmony, will appear to have left this chief part of his work, and the end of all the rest, to the

reign of everlasting discord, confusion and ruin ; contradicting and conflicting with its own nature and faculties ; having reason, and yet acting in all things contradictory to it ; being men, but yet beasts ; setting sense above reason ; improving reason only as a weapon of mischief and destruction of God's workmanship.

§ 4. I would again argue, that God must maintain a moral government over mankind, thus:—It is evident, that it was agreeable to the Creator's design, that there should be *some* moral government maintained amongst men ; because, without any, either in nations, provinces, towns, or families, and also without any divine government over the whole, the world of mankind could not subsist, but would destroy itself. Men would be not only much more destructive to each other, than any kind of animals are to their own species, but a thousand times more than any kind of beasts are to those of any other species. Therefore, the nature that God has given all mankind, and the circumstances in which he has placed them, lead all, in all ages throughout the habitable world, into moral government. And the Creator doubtless intended this for the preservation of this highest species of creatures ; otherwise he has made much less provision for the defence and preservation of this species, than of any other. There is no kind of creature that he has left without proper means for its own preservation. But unless man's own reason, to be improved in moral rule and order, be the means he has provided for the preservation of man, he has provided him with no means at all. Therefore, it is doubtless the original design of the Creator, that there should be moral subordination amongst men, and that he designed there should be heads, princes or governors, to whom honour, subjection and obedience should be paid. Now, this strongly argues, that the Creator himself will maintain a moral government over the whole. For, without this, the preservation of the species is but very imperfectly provided for. If men have nothing but human government to be a restraint upon their lusts, and have no rule or judgment of an universal omniscient governor to be a restraint upon their consciences, still they are left in a most woful condition, and the preservation and common benefit of the species, according to its necessities, and the exigencies of its place, nature, and circumstances in the creation, is in nowise provided for, as the preservation and necessities of other species are.

Now, is it reasonable to think, that the Creator would so constitute the circumstances of mankind, that some particular persons, that have only a little image and shadow of his greatness and power over men, should exercise it, in giving forth edicts, and executing judgment; and that he who is above all, and the original of all, should exercise no power in this way himself, when mankind stand in so much more need of such an exercise of his power, than of the power of human governors?—He has infinitely the greatest right to exercise the power of a moral governor, if he pleases. His relation to man as his Creator, most naturally leads to it. He is infinitely the most worthy of that respect, honour and subjection that is due to a moral governor. He has infinitely the best qualifications of a governor, being infinitely wise, powerful and holy, and his government will be infinitely the most effectual to answer the ends of government.

§ 5. It is manifest, that the Creator of the world, in constituting human moral governments among men, has, in that constitution, had great respect to those qualifications, that relation, and those rights and obligations, in those whom he has appointed to be rulers, and in putting others under their moral government, which he has in himself in a vastly more eminent degree. As particularly, in the government of parents over their children, which of all other kinds of human moral government is most evidently founded in nature, and which the preservation of the species doth most immediately require. Here God hath set those to be moral rulers, who are the wiser and stronger, and has appointed those to be in subjection who are less knowing, and weaker, and have received being from their rulers, and are dependent, preserved and maintained. Would not he therefore maintain moral government himself over mankind, who is their universal father, their universal preserver, who maintains all, and provides all with food and raiment, and all the necessaries and enjoyments of life, and is infinitely wiser and stronger than they? Would not he maintain a moral government over men, who need his government, as children need the government of their parents, and who are no more fit to be left to themselves in the world without his rules, directions, authority, promises, threatenings and judgment, than children are fit to be left to themselves in a house?

§ 6. As man is made capable of knowing his Creator, so

he is capable of a high esteem of his perfections, his power, wisdom, and goodness. He is capable of a proper esteem of God for his wise, excellent and wonderful works, which he beholds; and for their admirable contrivance, which appears in so excellently ordering all things; and of gratitude to him for all the goodness of which he himself is the subject; or, on the contrary, of slighting and despising him, and hating him, finding fault with his works, reproaching him for them, slighting all his goodness which he receives from him; yea, hating him for ordering things in his providence to him as he has done, and cursing and blaspheming him for it.

Now, it is unreasonable to suppose, that God should be an indifferent spectator of those things in his creature made in his own image, and made superior to all other creatures; and in a creature that he values above all the rest of the creation. It cannot be equally agreeable to him, whether man gives him proper esteem, love, honour, and gratitude; or, on the contrary, unreasonably despises, hates, and curses him. And if he be not an indifferent spectator of these things, then he will not act as a perfectly indifferent spectator, and wholly let men alone, and order things in no respect differently for those ends one way or other. But so it must be, if God maintains no moral government over mankind.

§ 7. As man is made capable of knowing his Creator, so he is capable of knowing his will in many things, i. e. he is capable of knowing his ends in this and the other works which he beholds. For it is this way principally that he comes to know there is a God, even by seeing the final causes of things; by seeing that such and such things are plainly designed and contrived for such and such ends; and therefore he is capable of either complying with the will of his Creator, or opposing it. He is capable of falling in with God's ends, and what he sees his Creator aim at, and co-operating with him, or of setting himself against the Creator's designs. It is manifest, that it is the Creator's design, that parents should nourish their children, and that children should be subject to their parents. If a man therefore should murder his children, or if children should rise up and murder their parents, they would oppose the Creator's aims. So if men use the several bodily organs to quite contrary purposes to those for which they were given, and if they use the faculties of their own minds to ends quite contrary to those for which they were fitted, (for doubtless

they were given and fitted for some end or other), he may perversely use his dominion over the creatures against the ends to which they were given. For, however far we suppose man may be from being capable of properly frustrating his Creator, yet he is capable of showing that his will is contrary to his Creator's ends. He may oppose his Creator in his *will*; he may dislike God's ends, and seek others. Now, the Creator cannot be an indifferent spectator of this; for it is a contradiction to suppose, that opposition to his will and aims should be as agreeable to him in itself, as complying with his will. And if he is not an indifferent spectator, then he will not act as such, and so he must maintain a moral government over mankind.

§ 8. This argument is peculiarly strong, as it respects man's being capable of falling in with, or opposing God's ends in his own creation, and his endowing him with faculties above the rest of the world. It is exceeding manifest concerning mankind, that God must have made them for some end; not only as it is evident that God must have made the world in general for some end, and as man is an intelligent, voluntary agent; but as it is especially manifest *from fact*, that God has made mankind for some special end. For, it is apparent, in fact, that God has made the inferior parts of the world for some end, and that the special end he made them for, is to subserve the benefit of mankind. Therefore, above all, may it be argued, that God has made mankind for some end. If an artificer accomplishes some great piece of workmanship, very complicated, and with a vast variety of parts, but the whole is so contrived and connected together, that there is some particular part which all the other parts are to subserve, we should well conclude that the workman had some special design to serve by that part, and that his peculiar aim in the whole, was what he intended should be obtained by that part. Now, man, the principal part of the creation, is capable of knowing his Creator, and is capable of discerning God's ends in the formation of other things; therefore, doubtless, since God discovers to him the ends for which he has made other things, it would be very strange, if he should not let him know the end for which he *himself* is made, or for which he had such distinguishing faculties given him, whereby he is set above other parts of the creation. Therefore, in the use of his own faculties, he must either fall in with the known design of the Creator in giving them, or

thwart it. He must either co-operate with his Creator, as complying with the end of his own being, or wittingly set himself as his enemy. Of this the Creator cannot be an indifferent spectator; and therefore, by what was said before, must maintain moral government over mankind.

§ 9. It may be argued, that God maintains a moral government over the world of mankind, from this, that the special end of the being of man is something wherein he has to do with his Creator. The special end of the brute creation is something wherein they are concerned with men. But man's special end is some improvement or use of his faculties towards God. For the *special* end for which God made mankind, is something very diverse and very superior to those ends for which he made any part of the inferior creation; because God has made man very different from them. But man's special end does not respect any other parts of the visible creation. All these are below him, and all, as we observed before, are made for him, to be subservient to his use. Their special end respects him; but his special end does not respect them. For, this is unreasonable in itself: If they are in their formation and end subordinated to him, and subjected to him, then the Maker set a greater value on him than them, and therefore he has not made him for them. For that would be to suppose them most valuable in the eyes of their Maker. And it is manifest, in fact, that the being of mankind does not subserve the benefit of the inferior creatures, any farther than is just necessary to turn them to his own use, and spend them in it.

To this we may add, that the happiness of the greater part of mankind, in their worldly enjoyments, is not great enough, or durable enough, to prove that the end of all things in the whole visible universe is only that happiness.—Therefore, nothing else remains, no other supposition is possible, but that man's special end is something wherein he has immediately to do with his Creator.

§ 10. If God has made men above other creatures, with capacities superior to them, for some special end, for which other creatures are not made, that special end must be something peculiar to them, for which they are capacitated and fitted by those superior faculties. Now, the greatest thing that men are capacitated for, by their faculties, more than the beasts, is, that they are capable of having intercourse

with their Creator, as intelligent and voluntary agents. They are capable of knowing, esteeming and loving him, and capable of receiving instructions and commands from him, and capable of obeying and serving him, if he be pleased to give commands, and make a revelation of his mind. Surely this is not without some end. He that has done nothing in the inferior world in vain, has not given man this capacity in vain. The sun has not its light given it without a final cause; and shall we suppose, that mankind has this light of the knowledge of their Creator, without a final cause?

Thus, it is evident, that the special end for which God has made man, is something wherein he has intercourse with his Creator, as an intelligent, voluntary agent. Hence, the consequence is certain, that mankind are subject to God's moral government. For, there can be no such thing maintained, as a communication between God and man, as between intelligent, voluntary agents, without moral government. For, in maintaining communication or converse, one must yield to the other, must comply with the other; there must be union of wills; one must be clothed with authority, the other with submission. If God has made man to converse with himself, he is not indifferent how he is conversed with. One manner of behaviour must be agreeable to his will, and another not; and therefore God cannot act as indifferent in this matter. He cannot let man alone, to behave toward him just as he pleases; therefore there must be moral government. God cannot be indifferent, whether he is respected and honoured, or is contemned and hated.

§ 11. Now as the consequence of the whole, I would infer two things:

1. A future state of rewards and punishments. For, unless there be such a state, it will certainly follow, that God, in fact, maintains no moral government over the world of mankind. For, otherwise, it is apparent, that there is no such thing as rewarding or punishing mankind, according to any visible rule, or indeed, according to any order or method whatsoever. Without this, there may be desires manifested, but there can be no proper laws established, and no authority maintained. Nothing is more manifest, than that in this world there is no such thing as a regular, equal disposing of rewards and punishments of men according to their moral estate. There is nothing in God's disposals toward men in this world, to make his distributive justice and judicial equity

visible, but all things are in the greatest confusion. Often the wicked prosper, and are not in trouble as other men.— They become mighty in power; yea, it has commonly been so in all ages, that they have been uppermost in the world. They have the ascendant over the righteous. They are mounted on thrones; while the righteous remain in cottages. And, in this world, the cause of the just is not vindicated.— Many wicked men have the righteous in their power, and trample them under foot, and become their cruel persecutors: And the righteous are oppressed, and suffer all manner of injuries and cruelties; while the wicked live, and reign in great glory and prosperity.

2. What has been said, does invincibly argue a divine revelation. Because, if God maintains a moral government over mankind, then there must be rewards and punishments. But these sanctions must be declared: For instance, the punishments which enforce God's laws must be made known. To suppose that God keeps up an equal, perfect moral government over the world, and yet leaves men wholly at a loss about the nature, manner, degree, time, place, and continuance of their punishment, or leaves it only to their guesses, or for them to argue it out from the nature of things, as well as they can, and every one to make his judgment according as his notions shall guide him, is a very unreasonable supposition. If moral government be maintained, the order and method of government must be visible; otherwise, it loses the nature of moral government. There may be a powerful disposal, as inanimate, unintelligible things are the subjects of God's government, in a visible and established order; but no *moral* government. The order of government serves to maintain authority, and to influence and rule the subject morally, no farther than it is visible. The notion of a moral government, without a revelation or declaration of the mind of the head by his word, or some voluntary sign or signification, in the whole of it is absurd. How absurd is it to suppose, that there should be converse and moral government maintained between the head and subjects, when both are intelligent, voluntary agents, without a voluntary communication of minds and expressions, thoughts and inclinations, between the head and the members of the society!

§ 12. It need not be looked upon as any objection to men's remaining in being after the death of their bodies, that the beasts that are made for man cease to be when they die.

For it is manifest, in fact, that man is the end of the rest of the creatures in this lower world. This world, with all its parts, inanimate, vegetative, and sensitive, was made for an habitation for man during his present state: And if man be the end of the rest of the creatures, for which the rest were made, and to whose use they are subordinated, then man is *instar omnium*. The end of all, is equivalent to the whole. Therefore there is no need of any thing else to be preserved; nothing is lost; no part is in vain. If the end of all be preserved, all is preserved: because he is all, the rest is only for his occasional use. The beasts subserve man's use in the present state; and then, though they cease, yet their end is obtained, and their good, which is their end, remains still in man. Though the tent that was set up for man to sojourn in during his state of probation, ceases when that occasion is over, surely that is no argument that the inhabitant ceases too.

And that the beasts are made for man, affords a good positive argument for a future state of man's existence. For that all other creatures in this lower world are made for man, and that he himself should be made for no more than they, viz. a short continuance in this world to enjoy the good things of it is unreasonable.

§ 13. The natural world, which is in such continual labour, as is described in the first chapter of Ecclesiastes, constantly going round in such revolutions, will doubtless come to an end! These revolutions are not for nothing. There is some great event and issue of things, some grand period aimed at. Does God make the world restless, to move and revolve in all its parts, to make no progress? To labour with motions so mighty and vast, only to come to the same place again? Some great end is nearer to an accomplishment, after a thousand revolutions are finished, than when there was only one finished. The waters of the sea are not so restless, continually to ascend into the heavens, and then descend on the earth, and then return to the sea again, only that things may be as they were before. One generation of men does not come, another go, and so continually from age to age, only that at last there may be what there was at first, viz. mankind upon earth. The wheels of God's chariot, after they have gone round a thousand times, do not remain just in the same place that they were in at first, without having carried the chariot nearer to a journey's end.

§ 14. This is a confirmation of a future state. For, if these revolutions have not something in another state that is to succeed this, then they are in vain. If any thing of this world is to remain, after its revolutions are at an end, doubtless it will be that part which is the head of all the rest; or that creature for which all the rest is made; and that is man. For, if he wholly ceases, and is extinct, it is as if the whole were totally extinct: Because he is the end of all. He is that creature, to serve whom the labours and revolutions of this world are, and whom they affect; and therefore, if he does not remain after the revolutions have ceased, then no end is obtained by all these revolutions: Because nothing abides as the fruit of them after they are finished. But all comes to no more than just what was before this world itself began, viz. an universal nonexistence; all is extinct; all is as if the world had never been; and therefore all has been in vain; for nothing remains as the fruit. He that is carried in the chariot, does not remain after he is brought with so much labour and vast ado to the end of his journey; but ceases to be, as the chariot itself does.

§ 15. This confirms the divinity of the Christian revelation; which gives this account of things, that this world is to come to an end; it is to be dissolved; that the revolutions of the world have an appointed period; and that man, the end of this lower world, is to remain in being afterwards; and gives a most rational account of the great period, design, and issue of all things, worthy of the infinite wisdom and majesty of God.

§ 16. Some part of the world, viz. that which is the highest, the head, and the end of the rest, must be of eternal duration, even the intelligent, reasonable creatures. For, if these creatures, the head and end of all the rest of the creation, come to an end, and be annihilated, it is the same thing as if the *whole* were annihilated. And if the world be of a temporary duration, and then drops into nothing, it is in vain, *i. e.* no end is obtained worthy of God. There is nobody but what will own, that if God had created the world, and then it had dropt into nothing the next minute, it would have been in vain; no end could be obtained worthy of God. And the only reason is, that the end would have been so small, by reason of the short continuance of the good obtained by it. And so it is still infinitely little, if it stand a million of ages,

and then drops into nothing. That is, as a moment in the sight of God. It is, in comparison of him, absolutely equivalent to nothing, and therefore an end not worthy of him. No end is worthy of an infinite God, but an infinite end; and therefore the good obtained must be of infinite duration. If it be not so, who shall fix the bounds? Who shall say a million of years is long enough? And if it be, who shall say a good of a thousand years continuance does not become the wisdom of God? And if it does, how can we say but that a good of still shorter continuance would not answer the ends of wisdom? If it would, who can say that the sovereignty of God shall not fix on a good of a minute's continuance as sufficient; which is as great in comparison with him as a million of years? The only reason why a good of a minute's continuance is not great enough to become the Creator of the world, is, that it is a good so little, when compared with him. And the same reason stands in equal force against a good of any limited duration whatsoever.

§ 17. It is often declared in the Old Testament, that God will bring every work into judgment; that there is verily a God that judgeth in the earth; that his eyes are on the way of man; that he considers all his goings: That the sins of the wicked, and the good deeds of the righteous are exactly observed, and written in a book of remembrance, and none of them forgotten; that they are sealed, and laid up among God's treasures; and that he will render to every man according to his works: That the Judge of all the earth will do right; and that therefore God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked: That as to the righteous, it shall be well with him, for he shall eat the fruit of his doings; that as to the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him; that it is impossible it should be otherwise; that there is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves from God the Judge; that God cannot forget his people; that a woman may sooner forget her sucking child; that God has graven them on the palms of his hands; that God beholds and takes notice of all their afflictions, and pities them, as a father pitieth his children; but that he is the enemy of wicked men; that their sins shall find them out; that though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished; that the way of righteousness is a certain way to happiness, and the way of sin a sure way to misery. Solomon himself is more abun-

dant than all other penmen of the Old Testament, in observing the difference between the righteous and the wicked in this respect, the greatness and the certainty of that difference.* And, in Ecclesiastes xii. 13, 14. Solomon declares, "That to fear God and keep his commandments, is the whole duty of man: because God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." And chap. v. 8. "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they." Chap. viii. 11. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." And therefore, there is some other time, beside the time of this life, for executing the sentence which he observes will so surely be executed. In Prov. x. 7. Solomon says, the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot. And of this memory or good name of the just, he says, (Eccles. vii. 1.) that "it is better than precious ointment, (meaning the precious ointment they were wont to anoint the children of great and rich men with, when first born); and that, upon this account, the day of a godly man's death (followed with a good name and so blessed a memory) is better than the day of one's birth."

§ 18. If God has perfectly forgiven all the sins of the righteous, and they are so high in his favour; and if the great evidence of this favour be the durableness of the benefits that are the fruits of it, and the chief fruit of it is life; then it is at least to be expected, that they will escape that mortality which is such a remarkable disgrace to those that have the human nature, and so wonderful to behold in those whom the *Most High* has made to differ so much from the beasts in capacity, dignity, end and design. We might surely expect, that these high favourites should, with regard to life and durableness of happiness, not be mere beasts, and have no pre-eminence above them; and that they should not be like the grass, and the flower of the field, which in the morning flourisheth and groweth up, but in the evening is cut down and withered; that

* See Prov. i. 31, 32.; and ii. 11, 21, 22.; and iii. 2, 4, 8, 13—18, 21—26, 32, 35.; iv. 5—13, 22.; viii. 17—21, 35, 36.; ix. 5, 6, 11, 12.; x. 16, 17, 27, 28, 29.; xi. 7, 8, 18, 19, 21, 30, 31.; xii. 2, 3, 14, 21, 28.; xiii. 9, 13, 14, 15, 21.; xiv. 19, 26, 27.; xv. 3, 6, 24.; xvi. 3—7.; xix. 23.; xxi. 15, 16, 18, 21.; xxii. 4, 8.; xxiii. 17, 18.; xxiv. 1—5, 12, 15, 16, 19—22.; xxviii. 10, 13, 14, 18.; xxix. 6.; and in many other places in the book of Proverbs.

all their happiness and all the benefits of God's favour should not be like a shadow, like a dream, like a tale that is told; that it should not be as a span, and should not pass away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey; to which things the life of man is compared in Scripture.

The things of this world are spoken of as having no profit or value, because they are not lasting, but must be left at death, and therefore are mere vanity, and not worthy that any man should set his heart on them; Psalm xlix. 6. to the end; Prov. xxiii. 4, 5.; Prov. xi. 7.; Ecclesiastes ii. 15, 16, 17.; chap. iii. ten first verses; verse 19.; chap. v. 14, 15, 16. But the rewards of righteousness are abundantly represented as exceedingly valuable and worthy that men should set their hearts upon them, because they are lasting; Prov. iii. 16.; viii. 18.; and x. 25, 27.; Isaiah lv. 3.; Psalm i. 3. to the end; Isaiah xvii. 7, 8.; and innumerable other places. How can these things consist one with another, unless there be a future state?

It is spoken of as a remarkable thing, and what one would not expect, that good men should die as wicked men do, as it seems to be, by good men's dying a temporal death as wicked men do; Eccles. ii. 16.; chap. ix. 3, 4, 5. And therefore, it may be argued, that it does but *seem* to be so; but that in reality it shall not be so, inasmuch as, though good men die a temporal death as wicked men do, yet, as to their happiness, they die not, but live for ever in a future state. It is an evidence of a future state, that in the Old Testament so many promises are made to the godly, of things that shall be after they are dead, which shall be testimonies of God's great favour to them, and blessed rewards of his favour; so many promises concerning their name, and concerning their posterity, and the future church of God in the world; and yet that we are so much taught in the Old Testament that men are never the better for what comes to pass after they are dead, concerning these things, (i. e. if we look only at the present life, without taking any other state of existence into consideration), Job xiv. 21.; Eccles. i. ii. iii. 22.; and ix. 5, 6. Yea the wise man says expressly, that the dead have no more a reward, (Eccles. ix. 5.) i. e. in any thing in this world.—That man shall die as a beast, seems to be spoken of, Eccles. iii. 16. to the end; as a vanity, an evil, a kind of mischief and confusion, that appears in the world. Therefore this is an argument, that God, the wise orderer of all things, who brings order out of confusion, will rectify this disorder by appointing a future state.

§ 19. It is an argument that the Old Testament affords for the proof of a future life and immortality, that we are there taught, that mortality is brought in by sin, and comes as a punishment of sin. Therefore, it is natural to suppose, that when complete forgiveness is promised, and perfect restoration to favour, and deliverance from death, and the bestowment of life, as the fruit of this favour, eternal life and immortality is intended.—The better men are, the more terrible would it make death, if there were no future state. For the better they are, the more they love God. Good men have found the fountain of good. Those men who have a high degree of love to God, greatly delight in God. They have experience of a much better happiness in life than others; and therefore it must be more dreadful for them to have their beings eternally extinct by death. Hence we may strongly argue a future state: for it is not to be supposed, that God would make man such a creature as to be capable of looking forward beyond death, and capable of knowing and loving him, and delighting in him as the fountain of all good, which will necessarily increase in him a dread of annihilation, and an eager desire of immortality; and yet, so order it, that such desire should be disappointed; so that his loving his Creator, should in some sense make him the more miserable.

§ 20. Nothing is more manifest, than that it is absolutely necessary, in order to a man's being thoroughly, universally and stedfastly virtuous, that his mind and heart should be thoroughly weaned from this world; which is a great evidence, that God intends another world for virtuous men. He surely would not require them, in their thoughts, affections and expectations, wholly to relinquish this world, if it were all the world they were to expect: if he had made them for this world wholly and only, and had created the world for them, to be their only country and home, all the resting place ever designed for them.—If all the creatures God has made are to come to an end, and the world itself is to come to an end, and so to be as though it had never been, then it will be with all God's glorious and magnificent works, agreeably to what is said of the temporal prosperity of the wicked, Job xx. 6, 7, 8. "Though its excellency be never so great, yet it shall perish for ever; it shall all fly away as a dream; it shall be chased away as a vision of the night." It shall vanish totally, and absolutely be as though it had not been.

CHAP. II.

CONCERNING THE ENDLESS PUNISHMENT OF THOSE WHO DIE
IMPENITENT.

§ 1. The word *everlasting* is used in the very sentence of the Judge at the last day, whom we cannot suppose to use rhetorical tropes and figures. The wicked that are finally impenitent, are represented as wholly cast away, lost, made no account of, &c. which is quite inconsistent with their punishment being medicinal, and for their good and purification, and to fit them for final and eternal happiness.—Eternal punishment is not eternal annihilation. Surely they will not be raised to life the last day, only to be annihilated. “The words used to signify the duration of the punishment of the wicked, do, in their etymology, truly signify a proper eternity; and if they are sometimes used in a less strict sense, when the nature of the thing requires it, yet that can never pass as any reason why they are not to be understood absolutely, when the subject is capable of it. They are terms the most expressive of an endless duration, of any that can be used or imagined. And they always signify so far positively endless, as to be express against any other period or conclusion, than what arises from the nature of the thing. They are never used in Scripture in any other limited sense, than to exclude all positive abolition, annihilation, or conclusion, other than what the natural intent or constitution of the subject spoken of must necessarily admit. The word *αιωνιος*, which is the word generally used by the sacred writers, is, we know, derived from the adverb *αι*, which signifies for ever, and cannot without force be used in any lower sense. And, particularly, this is the word by which the eternal and immutable attributes of Deity are several times expressed.” Dodwell’s sermon in answer to Whiston, p. 15, 16.

§ 2. If the torments of hell are *purifying* pains, that purge the damned from their sins, it must be by bringing them to repentance, convincing them of the evil of sin, and inducing them to forsake it, and with a sincere heart to turn from sin to God, and heartily to choose virtue and holiness:

There is no other way for sinners being purged as moral agents ; and, if hell fire is the means of any other purification, it cannot be a moral purification.

If the wicked in hell are the subjects of torments, in order to their purification, and so being fitted for, and finally brought to eternal happiness ; then they are the subjects of a dispensation, that is truly a dispensation of love, and of divine and infinite goodness and benevolence, towards them.—And if the design of the pains of hell be that of kind and benevolent chastisement, to bring sinners to repentance, and compliance with the divine will ; then we cannot suppose that they will be continued after the sinner has repented, and is actually brought to yield and comply. For that would be to continue them for no purpose ; to go on using means and endeavours to obtain the end, when the end is accomplished, and the thing aimed at is fully obtained already.—Moreover, if the damned, after many ages suffering extreme torment in hell, are to be delivered, and made perfectly and eternally happy, then they must be in a state of probation during this long season of their confinement to such extreme misery. If they are not in a state of probation, or on any trial how will they behave themselves under these severe and terrible inflictions of wrath, but are to be delivered, and made eternally happy at the end of a certain period ; then what restraints are they under from giving an unbounded loose and licence to their wickedness, in expressions of enmity against God, in cursing and blaspheming, and whatever their hearts are inclined to ? And if they are in such a state as this, wherein they are thus left to unrestrained wickedness, and every curb to their most wicked inclination is taken off, being nevertheless sure of deliverance and everlasting happiness ; how far is this state fit to be a state of purgation of rational creatures and moral agents from sin, being a state wherein they are so far from means of repentance, reformation, and entirely reclaiming and purging them from sin, that all manner of means are rather removed ; and so much is every restraint taken off, that they are given up wholly to sin, which, instead of purifying them, will tend above all things that can be conceived, to harden them in sin, and desperately establish the habits of it ?

§ 3. A state of purgation of moral agents, that is, a state to bring sinners to repentance and reformation, and not a state of trial, is a gross absurdity. If any should say, that, “ though we should maintain that the pains of hell are purifying

pains, to bring sinners to repentance, in order to their deliverance and eternal happiness; yet there will be no necessity of supposing, either that they may sin with impunity, and so without restraint; or that they are properly in a state of probation: for they have no probation whether they shall finally have eternal happiness, because it is absolutely determined by the benevolent Creator, concerning his intelligent creatures, that they shall finally be brought to a state of happiness: but yet their circumstances may be such as may tend greatly to restrain their wickedness, because that the time of their torment shall be longer or shorter, according as they behave themselves under their chastisements more or less perversely; or that their torment shall be raised to a greater height, and additions be made in proportion to the wickedness they commit in their purgatory flames." To this, I ANSWER: Even on this supposition they are in a state of *probation* for a more speedy possession of eternal life and happiness, and deliverance from further misery and punishment; this makes their state as much a state of probation, as their state in the present life. For here it is supposed by these men, that sinners are not in a state of trial, whether ever they shall obtain eternal happiness or no; because that is absolutely determined, and the determination known or knowable concerning all without any trial. But only it is a state of trial whether they shall obtain eternal life so soon as at the end of their lives, or at the day of judgment. Neither have they any trial during this life, whether they shall escape all affliction and chastisement for sin or not; but whether they shall be relieved from a state of suffering so soon, and shall escape those severer and longer chastisements that, with respect to many, are to come afterwards.

And on the supposition of the objection, there must be the proper circumstances of a state of probation in hell, as well as on earth. There they must likewise be continued in that state of free agency, that renders them properly the subjects of judgment and retribution. For on the supposition of the objection, they shall be punished for their wickedness in hell, by an addition to their misery proportioned to their sin; and they shall be the subjects of God's merciful strivings, endeavours, and means to bring them to repentance, as well as here. And there must be a divine judgment after the trial, to determine their retribution, as much as after this life. And the same, or like things, must be determined by the Supreme Judge, as will be determined at the day of

judgment. At that great day, on the supposition of such as I oppose, What will be determined concerning the impenitent? not what their eternal state shall be, but only whether they must have eternal happiness immediately; whether they have repented, and are qualified for immediate admission to heavenly glory; or, whether the bestowment of it shall be delayed, and farther chastisements made use of, and so it must be again after their castigatory purifying pains. At the end of all, there must be a judgment, whether now they truly repent, and so have performed the condition of deliverance, and immediate admission to the state of the blessed, or whether there shall be a further season of misery; which brings it in all respects to be a proper judgment, as much as that at the general resurrection; and the preceding time of the use of means and God's striving with them to bring them to repentance, is as much a proper time of trial in order to judgment, as the time of this life.

§ 4. But if the damned are in a state of trial, let it be considered how unreasonable this is. If they are in a state of trial, then they must be in a state of liberty and moral agency, as those men will doubtless own; and so, according to their notion of liberty, must be under no necessity of continuing in their rebellion and wickedness, but may cast away their abominations, and turn to God and their duty, in a thorough subjection to his will, very speedily. And then, seeing the end of their probationary state, and the severe means God uses with them to bring them to repentance, is obtained; how unreasonable will it be to suppose, that God, after this, would continue them still under hell torments for a long succession of ages? But if God should speedily deliver them on their speedy repentance; How are the threatenings and predictions of their everlasting punishment fulfilled in any sense, according to the sense even of those who deny the absolute eternity of the misery of hell, and hold, that the words *everlasting* and *for ever*, &c. when applied to the misery of the damned, are not to be taken in the strictest sense? They yet allow they signify a very long time, a great many ages.

§ 5. If the devils and damned spirits are in a state of probation, and have liberty of will, and are under the last and most extreme means to bring them to repentance, and consequently the greatest means, having the strongest tendency of all to be effectual, I say, if thus, then it is possible

that the greatest part, if not all of them, may be reclaimed by those extreme means, and may be brought to thorough repentance before the day of judgment; yea, it is possible, it might be very soon. And, if so, how could it certainly be predicted concerning the devil, that he would do such and such great things in opposition to Christ and his church, from age to age? and that at last he should be judged and punished, and have God's wrath more terribly executed upon him? as, Rev. xx. 10. "And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever." And how is it said in Scripture, that when he fell, he was cast down from heaven, and reserved under chains of darkness unto judgment? The expression seems naturally to signify strong and irrefragable bonds, which admit of no comfort or hope of escape. And besides, a being reserved in chains unto judgment, is not consistent with the appointment of another time of trial and opportunity to escape the judgment and condemnation. It is said, Jude 6. "They are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." And if any of the separate souls of the wicked, that are in the case that the soul of the rich man was in, when he died and lift up his eyes in hell being in torments, should repent and be delivered *before* the day of judgment, and so should appear at the right hand among the righteous at that day, then how could that be verified, 2 Cor. v. 10. "For we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, whether good or bad?" And we have reason to think, that the time of standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, which the apostle has a special respect to, is the day of judgment, if we compare this with other Scriptures; as that of the same apostle, Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man, whom he hath ordained." And many other places.

§ 6. And how does their being in a state of trial, many of them for so many ages after death before the day of judgment, during all which time they have opportunity to repent, consist with those words of Christ, Mark viii. 38. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father,

with the holy angels?" How is their continuing in a state of trial from the time of that generation, and from the end of their lives to the day of judgment, consistent with its being declared to them from God beforehand, that they shall certainly be condemned at the day of judgment? or, with Christ's certifying them beforehand, that whatever trial they shall have, whatever opportunity God should give them for repentance and pardon, for so many ages, all would be in vain; which in effect is passing the sentence. We may argue in like manner, from those words, Matt. x. 14, 15. "And whosoever shall not receive you, and hear your words,—Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." So Matt. xi. 21, 22. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida:—I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you.—And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell. I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

It is here declared, what the state of those obstinate unbelievers should be at the day of judgment, for their wickedness here in the body, with an asseveration, *I say unto you*. And sentence indeed is passed beforehand upon them by their Judge, concerning the punishment that shall be executed upon them at the day of judgment. The declaration is made in the form of a solemn denunciation or sentence: *Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida, &c.* And is it reasonable to suppose, that the very Judge that is to judge them at the end of the world, would peremptorily declare, that they should not escape punishment at the day of judgment; yea, solemnly denounce sentence upon them, dooming them to the distinguished punishment they should then suffer for their obstinacy in their lifetime; and yet appoint another time of trial, of a great many hundred years between their death and the day of judgment, wherein they should have opportunity to escape that punishment?

§ 7. It is here also to be observed, that the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha should be condemned to misery at the day of judgment, though they had already been in their purifying flames, and in a state of probation. The apostle (Rom. ii. 16.) repeatedly tells us, when these things shall be, that men shall thus receive their retribution; "In

the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel?" which shews that this life is the only state of trial, and that all men shall be judged at the end of the world according to their behaviour in this life, and not according to their behaviour in another state of trial, between this life and that day. So, it is apparent, by 2 Thess. i. 5—9. "Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God—seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction," &c. Here it is manifest, that all who are obstinate unbelievers, rejectors of the gospel, shall at the day of judgment, be punished with everlasting destruction. So that no room is left for a state of trial, and a space to repent before that time for ages in hell. So it is apparent, Matt. xxv. that none will be found at the right hand, but they that have done such good works, as can be done only in this world; which would not be declared beforehand, if there was an opportunity given for millions of others to obtain that privilege.

§ 8 It may be proved, that the day of man's trial, and the time of God's striving in the use of means to bring him to repentance, and waiting for his repentance under the use of means, will not be continued after this life, from those words, Gen. vi. 6. "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be 120 years." It is as much as to say, that it is not fit that this day of trial and opportunity should last always to obstinate, perverse sinners. It is fit some bounds should be set to my striving and waiting on such as abuse the day of my patience; and that merciful means and gracious calls should not be continued, without limits, to them that trample all means and mercies under foot, and turn a deaf ear to all calls and invitations, and treat them with constant contempt. Therefore I will fix a certain limit; I will set their bounds to 120 years: when, if they repent not, I will put an end to all their lives, and with their lives shall be an end of my striving and waiting. This, which in Genesis is called *God's spirit striving*, is by the apostle Peter expressed by *the waiting of the long-suffering of God*; 1 Pet. iii. 20. But, according to the doctrine we

are opposing, instead of God's striving and using means to bring those wicked men to repentance, and waiting in the use of striving and endeavours 120 years, or to the end of their lives, and no longer; he has gone on still since that, for above 4000 years, striving with them in the use of more powerful means to bring them to repentance, and waiting on them, and will continue to do so for so long a time afterwards, that the time is often called everlasting, and represented as enduring for ever and ever.

§ 9. Those words of Christ, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh wherein no man can work," John ix. 4. prove that there is no other day of trial after this life. Christ having undertaken for us, and taken on him our nature, and appearing in the form of a servant, and standing as our surety and representative, had a great work appointed him of God to do in this life for eternity. He could not obtain eternal life and happiness for himself any other way, than by doing that work in this life, which was the time of his probation for eternity, as well as ours. And therefore his words imply as much as if he had said, I must do that work which God has appointed me to do for eternity, that great service which must be done, as I would be eternally happy, now while the day of life lasts, which is the only day appointed for the trial of man's faithfulness in the service of God, in order to his being accepted to eternal rewards. Death is coming, which will be the setting of the sun, and the end of this day; after which no work will remain, nothing to be done that will be of any significance in order to the obtaining of the recompence of eternal felicity.

§ 10. And doubtless to the same purpose is that in Eccles. ix. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: For there is no work," (or no man can work), "nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." As much as to say, after this life, nothing can be done, nothing invented or devised in order to your happiness; no wisdom or art will serve you to any such purpose, if you neglect the time of the present life. It is unreasonable to suppose the wise man means only that we should in this life do all that we can in temporal concerns, and to promote our temporal interest, and that nothing can be done towards this after this life: not only as this would be an observation of very

little importance, it being as flat and impertinent as if he had said, whatever your hand finds to do this year, do it with your might; for nothing that you do or devise the next year, will signify any thing to promote your interest and happiness this year: but also because the wise man himself, in the conclusion of this book, informs us, that his drift through the whole book is, to induce us to do a spiritual work; to fear God and keep his commandments, in order, not to happiness in this life, (which he tells us through the book is never to be expected), but in order to a future happiness and retribution in consequence of a judgment to come; chap. xii. 13, 14. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments. For this is the whole" (*i. e.* the whole business, the whole concern) "of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

§ 11. If the wicked in hell are in a state of trial, under severe chastisement, as means in order to their repentance and obtaining the benefit of God's favour in eternal rewards, then they are in a state of such *freedom* as makes them moral agents, and the proper subjects of judgment and retribution. Then those terrible chastisements are made use of as the most powerful means of all, more efficacious than all the means used in this life which prove ineffectual, and which proving insufficient to overcome sinners' obstinacy, and prevail with their hard hearts, God is compelled to relinquish them all, and have recourse to those torments as the last means, the most effectual and powerful. If the torments of hell are to last ages of ages, then it must be because sinners in hell all this while are obstinate; and though they are free agents as to this matter, yet they wilfully and perversely refuse, even under such great means to repent, forsake their sins, and turn to God. It must be farther supposed, that all this while they have the offers of immediate mercy, and deliverance made to them, if they will comply. Now, if this be the case, and they shall go on in such wickedness, and continue in such extreme obstinacy and pertinaciousness, for so many ages, (as is supposed, by its being thought their torments shall be so long continued,) how desperately will their guilt be increased? How many thousand times more guilty at the end of the term, than at the beginning? And therefore they will be much the more proper objects of divine severity, deserving God's wrath, and still a thousand times more severe

or longer continued chastisements than the past; and therefore it is not reasonable to suppose, that all the damned should be delivered from misery, and received to God's favour, and made the subjects of eternal salvation and glory at that time, when they are many thousand times more unworthy of it, more deserving of continuance in misery, than when they were first cast into hell. It is not likely that the infinitely wise God should so order the matter. And if their misery should be augmented, and still lengthened out much longer, to atone for their new contracted guilt; they must be supposed to continue impenitent, till that second additional time of torment is ended; at the end of which their guilt will still be risen higher, and vastly increased beyond what it was before. And, at this rate, where can there be any place for an end of their misery?

§ 12. It farther appears from what was observed above, that the sinner continuing obstinate in wickedness under such powerful means to reclaim him, for so long a time, will be so far from being more and more purged, or brought nearer to repentance, that he will be farther from it. Wickedness in his heart will be vastly established and increased. For, it may be laid down as an axiom, that the longer men continue wilfully in wickedness, the more is the habit of sin established, and the more and more will the heart be hardened in it. Again it may be laid down as another axiom, that the greater and more powerful the means are, that are used to bring men to reform and repent, which they resist, and are obstinate under, the more desperately are men hardened in sin, and the more the principle of it in the heart is confirmed. It may be laid down as a third axiom, that long continuance in perverse and obstinate rebellion against any particular kind of means, tend to render those particular means vain, ineffectual, and hopeless.

After the damned in hell have stood it out with such prodigious perverseness and stoutness, for ages of ages, in their rebellion and enmity against God, refusing to bow to his will under such constant, severe, mighty chastisements, attended all the while with offers of mercy, what a desperate degree of hardness of heart and fixed strength of habitual wickedness will they have contracted at last, and inconceivably farther will they be from a penitent, humble, and pure heart, than when first cast into hell! And if the torments should be lengthened out still longer, and also their impeni-

tence, (as by the supposition one will not end before the other does); still the farther will the heart be from being purified. And so, at this rate, the torments will never at all answer their end, and must be lengthened out to all eternity.

§ 13. Mat. v. 25, 26. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt not come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." These words imply, that sinners are in the way with their adversary, having opportunity to be reconciled to him but for a short season, inasmuch as it is intimated, that they must agree with him quickly, or they shall cease to be in the way with him, or to have opportunity to obtain his favour any more. But, if they shall be continued in a state of *probation* after death to the end of the world, and after that for ages, how far, how very far, are these words of Christ from representing the matter as it is?

§ 14. That some even in this world are utterly forsaken of God, and given up to their own hearts lusts, proves that these men never will be purified from their sins. That God should, in the future world, use great means to purify them, and fit them for eternal happiness and glory, in the enjoyment of himself, is not consistent with the supposition, that, after the use of great means and endeavours with them in this world, he gives them up to sin, because of their incorrigibleness and perverse obstinate continuance in rebellion, under the use of those great means, and so leaves them to be desperately hardened in sin, and to go on and increase their guilt, and multiply transgressions to their utter ruin; which is agreeable to manifold representations of scripture. This is not agreeable to the scheme of such as suppose, that God is all the while, before and after death, prosecuting the design of purifying and preparing them for eternal glory. Consider Psal. xcii. 7. "When the wicked spring as grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever." These places show, God has no merciful design with those whom he gives up to sin.

§ 15. The apostle, in Heb. vi. 4—6. says, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, &c. if they fall away, to renew them

again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame," &c. The apostle speaks of their renovation to repentance, as never likely to happen; for this reason, that they have proved irreclaimable under such great means to bring them to repentance, and have thereby so desparately hardened their hearts, and contracted such great guilt by sinning against such great light, and trampling on such great privileges. But if so, how much more unlikely still will it be, that they should ever be renewed to repentance, after they have gone on still more and more to harden their hearts by an obstinate, wilful continuance in sin, many thousand years longer, under much greater means; and have therefore done immensely more to establish the habit of sin, and increase the hardness of their hearts; and after their guilt is so vastly increased, instead of being diminished? If it be impossible to bring them to repentance, after they have rebelled against such light and knowledge of Christ, and the things of another world, as they had in this life; how much more impossible is it, when, added to this, they have had that infinitely greater and clearer knowledge and view of those things to be manifested at the day of judgment? Then they shall see Christ in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels; shall see his great majesty, and know the truth of his promises and threatenings, by sight and experience; and shall see all those ineffable manifestations of the glory of Christ, of his power, omniscience, strict inflexible justice, infinite holiness and purity, truth and faithfulness, and his infinite mercy to penitents. They shall then see the dreadful consequences of rebellion and wickedness, and the infinitely happy and glorious consequences of the contrary; and, even at this time, (on the supposition) have the offers of mercy and deliverance from that dreadful misery, and the enjoyment of the favour of their great Judge, and participation of all the happiness and glory of the righteous which they shall see at his right hand, if then they will throw down the weapons of their rebellion, and repent, and comply with his will. But if they still, from the greatness of their enmity and perverseness, obstinately and wilfully refuse, yea, and continue still thus refusing, even after they have actually felt the terrible wrath of God, and are cast into the lake of fire; yea, after they have continued there many ages, all the while under offers of mercy on repentance: I say, if it be impossible to renew them to repentance, after their rebelling against, and trampling on the light and knowledge, and means

used with them in this world, so that it is not to be expected, because of the degree of hardness and guilt contracted by it; how much less is it to be expected at the day of judgment, after all this obstinacy manifested, and guilt contracted? If guilt be contracted by despising such means and advantages as the apostle has respect to in this life, that it may be compared to guilt that would be contracted by crucifying Christ afresh; how much more, when, added to this, they shall so openly have despised Christ, when appearing to them in all the terrors, and glories, and love, that shall be manifested at the day of judgment, in their immediate and most clear view, and all is offered to them, if they will but yield subjection to him; and their enmity shall have appeared so desperate as rather to choose that dreadful lake of fire, and shall have continued in their choice even after they have felt the severity of that torment without rest day or night for many ages?

§ 16. That all shall not be finally purified and saved, is manifest from Matt. xii. 31, 32. "Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."—Also, Mark iii. 28, 29. "Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and all blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."—And 1 John v. 16. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say he shall pray for it." From each of these places, it is manifest, that he that is guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall surely be damned, without any deliverance from his punishment, or end to it.—The various expressions that are used, serve much to certify and fix the import of others. In Matt. xii. 31. it is said, "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." The negative is general, and equally respects all times. If this sin should be forgiven at a remote time, it would be as contrary to such a negative, as if it were forgiven him immediately. But, to determine us that Christ has respect to all times, even the remotest, and that he means to

deny that he shall be forgiven at any time whatsoever, in Mark it is said, "He shall never be forgiven; or, hath never forgiveness;" and, lest this never should be interpreted to mean, never as long as he lives, or never in this world, it is said in Matt. xii. 32. "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come." And lest it should be said, that, although he never is forgiven, yet that does not hinder but that there may be an end to his punishment; because he may suffer all he deserves in suffering a temporal punishment, or punishment of a limited, long duration; and he that is acquitted in paying all his debt, is not said to be forgiven his debt: another expression is used in Mark, which shows, that he shall ever suffer damnation, and never have deliverance from his misery, whether by forgiveness or without it.—"Hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation." And the forementioned expressions, "He shall never be forgiven;" "He hath never forgiveness;" "Shall not be forgiven in this world, nor the world to come," shew the meaning of the word *eternal* here, to be such as absolutely excludes any period, any time of favour, wherein condemnation and punishment, shall have ceased. And what the apostle John says of those who commit the unpardonable sin, confirms the whole, and proves, that he that has committed this sin remains under no dispensation of mercy, and that no favour is ever to be hoped for from God; and therefore it is not our duty to pray for such favour. "There is a sin unto death, I do not say he shall pray for it;" or, I give you no direction to pray for them that sin this sin unto death.

§ 17. Thus it is evident, that all wicked men will not have an end to their damnation; but when it is said, they are in danger of eternal or everlasting damnation, the word *eternal* is to be understood in the strictest sense. The same terms are used concerning all impenitent sinners, that they shall be sentenced to eternal punishment, and shall go into everlasting punishment, &c.—That their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; and they shall be tormented for ever and ever; and such terms are used after this world comes to an end; and also when they who have committed the unpardonable sin, and others, shall be sentenced all together to an everlasting fire, in the same terms. It is unreasonable to suppose that the punishment of some will be everlasting, in an infinitely different sense from others jointly sentenced; and

that the duration of the punishment of one shall be perfectly as nothing, compared with the duration of the punishment of the other, infinitely less than a second to a million of ages. And it is unreasonable to suppose such a difference, also on this account, that there cannot be such a difference in the demerit of them that commit the unpardonable sin, and the demerit of the sins of all other wicked men, some of whom are exceedingly, and almost inconceivably wicked. There cannot be a truly infinite difference in their guilt, as there must be a properly infinite difference between the dreadfulfulness of those torments that have an end, however long continued, and however great, and the torments of a truly and strictly everlasting fire,

§ 18. If the damned in hell shall all finally be saved, they shall be saved without Christ. It is manifest, that Christ's saving work will be at an end at the day of judgment; for, as Christ has a twofold office, that of the *Saviour* of the world, and the *Judge* of the world; so, the business of the latter office properly succeeds the former. It is not fit in the nature of things, that he should come into the world and appear openly in the character of *universal Judge*, to decide men's state—in consequence of the trial there has been for making their state better by salvation—till that trial is over, and all its effects completed, when no more is to be hoped as to altering their state for the better by his salvation. Therefore Christ, at his *first* coming, appeared in order to *save* men from condemnation and a sentence of eternal misery; and not to *judge* them, as he tells us, John xii. 47. "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came, not to judge the world, but to save the world." See also chap. iii. 17. and viii. 15. But the great business he will come upon at his *second* coming, as is abundantly declared, is to judge the world. And it is also exceedingly plain, that Christ's saving work will be at an end at the day of judgment; because we read, 2 Cor. xv. that at the end of the world he will deliver up his kingdom; he will resign his commission: which proves, that the work of salvation, which is the design of it, will be at an end, when all his enemies, all that rejected him, and would not have him to rule over them, and so have failed of his salvation, shall be made his footstool, shall be condemned and destroyed. Instead of being the heirs of salvation, he shall come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not

the gospel of Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, &c. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9, 10.

§ 19. If the damned, after they have suffered awhile, are to be delivered, and to have eternal life; then the present dispensation of grace and life to the fallen children of men, that was introduced by Christ and his apostles, is not the last; but another is to be introduced after this has proved unprofitable and ineffectual. But, that a new dispensation of grace should thus be introduced, because that which was brought in by Christ and his apostles, proves weak and unprofitable through men's corruption, and there appears to be need of one which shall be more effectual, is not agreeable to the Scripture. For this dispensation is spoken of as the last and most perfect, wherein perfection was reached, Heb. vii. 19. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." And chap. xi. 40. "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." The ancient dispensation is spoken of as that which God found fault with, in proving ineffectual through the corruption of men; and so he introduced a new administration, that should not be liable to exception, and therefore should not wax old, or be ever liable to vanish away and give place to another. Heb. viii. 6. to the end. So he speaks of the things of that ancient dispensation, as things which were liable to be shaken and removed; but of the things of the new dispensation then introduced, as those that could not be shaken, but should remain for ever; Heb. xii. 25. to the end; and 2 Cor. iii. 11. The dispensation of the New Testament is often spoken of in the prophecies of the Old Testament as an everlasting dispensation; Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. chap. xxxii. 40. Isa. lxi. 8. Ezek. xxxvii. 26.

§ 20. To suppose that, after all the means of grace that are used in this world, Moses and the prophets, Christ and the gospel, the warnings of God's word, and the exhibitions of glorious gospel grace, have been despised and obstinately withstood, so as to make the case desperate as to their success, God has other means in reserve, to be used afterwards to make men holy, that will be more powerful, and shall be effectual; is not agreeable to Scripture. Particularly, Luke xvi. 27. to the end: "Then he said, I pray thee therefore,

Father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house : for I have five brethren, that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. And he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." And this is especially manifest, from Rev. xxii. 10, 11, 12. " And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still. And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be."

I think the meaning must be either, The time is quickly coming, when every man's state will be fixed, inasmuch as I am quickly coming to judgment, to fix every man's state unalterably, according as his work shall be ; and after that there will be no alteration, nor any means or endeavours in order to it ; but he that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still : and if this be the meaning, it makes it evident, that Christ will not immediately proceed to the use of the most powerful and effectual means of all, to change the state of the unjust and filthy, to purify them and make them holy, and fit them for eternal glory, with infallible success.—Or, The meaning must be this, which seems to be much the most probable : Christ having given this last revelation to his church to be added to the book of Scripture, with which the canon was to be shut up and sealed, by the instrumentality of the apostle John, who lived the longest of the apostles, and wrote this book after all the rest were dead ; orders John ver. 10. to publish this book, wherein such great future judgments are revealed as coming on the wicked, and such an affecting declaration of the future glory of the saints, to enforce the rest of God's word and means of grace ; and then intimates, that no more revelations are to be expected, no more instructions and warnings are to be added to the word of God, as the steady means of grace, any further to confirm and enforce the rest ; that the next revelation that is to be expected, and that Christ will make of himself to the world, is to be his immediate appearance in judgment, to fix unalterably every man's state according to his works, according to the improvement he shall have made of those past revelations, instructions and warnings : and therefore, those that will not

be purified by those means, are not to expect that better, or other means, will ever be used with them; but he that is unjust must remain so still, and he that is filthy must be filthy still, and he that is righteous shall be righteous still, and he that is holy shall be holy still. Thus Christ takes leave of his church till his last coming, warning them to improve the means of grace they have, and informing them that they are never to have any other: *q. d.* They have Moses and the prophets; and, in the writings of the New Testament, they have more glorious, powerful, and efficacious revelations of me. Those writings I now finish and seal. Let them hear these, and make a good improvement of them: for these are the last means I shall ever use to change man's state. This is inconsistent with his reserving his greatest and most powerful means, with a determined certain success, to be used after the day of judgment.

§ 21. They who suppose the damned are made to suffer the torments of hell for their purification, suppose, that God is herein prosecuting his grand design of benevolence to his creatures; yea, benevolence to the sufferers; and that he does not use these severe means but from necessity for their good, because all gentle remedies prove ineffectual. Now, it is unreasonable to suppose, that God is under any necessity of inflicting such extreme torments upon them for so long a time, in order to their being brought to repentance; and that,

1. If we consider the *nature of things*: torments inflicted have *no tendency* to bring a wicked man to repentance directly and properly, if by repentance we mean an alteration of the disposition, and appetites, and taste of the mind. We know by experience, that pain inflicted for gratifying an appetite, may make men afraid to gratify the appetite; but they do not change the inclination, or destroy the appetite. They may make men willing to comply with external exercises, of which they have a distaste, and to which their heart, in its relish and inclinations, is averse; yet not from love to the things complied with, but from hatred of pain, and love of ease. So that the man complies in some sense; but his *heart* does not comply. He is only driven, and as it were forced: and an increase of pain alters not the nature of things. It may make a man more earnestly to desire freedom from pain; but still there is no more to be expected from it, than is in the tendency of pain, which is not to give a new nature, a

new heart, or a new natural relish and disposition. It is not granted, that even long continued pains and practice will gradually raise an habitual love to virtue. The pains of the damned being great and long continued, may more and more convince them of the folly of their negligence and fearlessness in sin, and may make them willing to take some pains, but will not shew them the beauty of holiness, or the odiousness of sin, so as to cause them to hate sin on its own account.

Can any one that considers human nature, especially of those that deny an innate, desperate wickedness of heart, (as the men that we have this controversy with generally do), doubt in the least, whether, if a man should be in a furnace of fire for one day only, alive and full of quick sense, and should retain a full and lively remembrance of his misery, it would not be sufficient to make him wholly comply with all the pains and outward self-denial requisite in order to an universal, external obedience to the precepts of the word of God, rather than have those torments renewed and continued for ages; and indeed rather than endure one more such day? What pains would not such a man be willing to suffer? What labours could be too much? What would he not be willing to part with, in foregoing worldly wealth or pleasures? Would not the most covetous man, that had felt such a rod as this, be willing to part with all his treasures of silver and gold? and the most ambitious man be willing to live in a cottage or wilderness? the most voluptuous man to part with his pleasures? Would he need first to endure many ages of such torment, before he would be willing thus far to comply? It is against all principles of human nature to suppose it. If he retains the remembrance of the torment, in a lively idea of it, it must unspeakably outweigh the most lively and affecting and attractive ideas of the good things of the world. The supposition, therefore, of his not being brought to compliance by less torment, is as unreasonable as to suppose, that a mote of dust would sink the scale, being put in a balance with a talent of lead, or with ten thousand talents. If the Most High compassionate these poor wretches, and has nothing but a kind and gracious design of infinite mercy and bounty towards them, why does he take such dreadful measures with them? Will no other do? Cannot infinite wisdom find out some gentler method to bring to pass the same design? If it be said, that no other can accomplish the effect, consistently with the freedom of will;—I answer, What means

can be devised, having a greater tendency to drive men, and compel them to comply with the thing required, (if there be any such thing,) without acting freely, and as persons left to their own free choice, than such a rod not only held over, but used upon them in such an amazing manner, by an omnipotent hand?

2. It is apparent, from what has often come to pass, that God is in no necessity of making use of such dreadful and long continued torments, in order to bring sinners to repentance. It is most unreasonable to suppose, that no sinners that ever were converted in this world, were, before their conversion, as wicked and as hard-hearted, as some of those that have died impenitent; as Saul the persecutor, afterwards the apostle Paul, and some of the converts, in the 2d chapter of Acts, who had a hand in Christ's crucifixion, and innumerable instances of persecutors and others, who have been brought to repentance since those days. Such were converted by gentler means than those pains of hell, in what the Scripture calls everlasting burnings; and that without any infringement of liberty necessary to their being moral agents. It would be unreasonable to suppose, that all those eighteen, on whom the tower of Siloam fell, were good men. But Christ would not have his hearers imagine they were worse than themselves; and yet intimates, that there was a possibility of their escaping future misery by repentance.

3. So far as pain and affliction are made use of to bring men to repentance, it is apparent God can make infinitely less severe chastisement effectual, together with such influences and assistances of his Spirit, as are not inconsistent with the persons' moral agency in their forsaking sin and turning to God. And, if it should be said, that none of them had the habits of sin so confirmed, as all such as die in sin; I would answer, That this is very unreasonably supposed: and If it should be allowed, yet it cannot be pretended, that the difference of guilt and hard-heartedness is proportionable at all to the severity of the chastisement used for purgation. If no more than ten degrees of pain, or one year's chastisement be requisite for the overcoming of five degrees of strength of the habit of sin, one would think, that less than 100,000 degrees, or 100,000 years chastisement, should be sufficient to overcome ten degrees of strength of the same habit.

§ 22. If the torments of hell are purifying pains, and

are used by a God of universal benevolence towards his creatures, as necessary means for the purgation of the wicked from sin, and their being fitted for, and finally brought to eternal happiness in the enjoyment of the love of God; then it will follow, that the damned in hell are still the objects of God's mercy and kindness, and that in the torments they suffer, they are the subjects of a dispensation of grace and benevolence. All is for their good: all is the best kindness that can be done them, the most benevolent treatment they are capable of, in their state of mind; and, in all, God is but chastising them as a wise and loving father, with a grieved and compassionate heart, gives necessary chastisement to sons whom he loves, and whose good he seeks to the utmost; in all he does he is only prosecuting a design of infinite kindness and favour. And indeed, some of the chief of those who are in the scheme of purifying pains, expressly maintain, that, instead of being the fruits of vindictive justice, they are the effects of God's benevolence, not only to the system of intelligent creatures in general, but to the sufferers themselves. Now, how far are these things from being agreeable to the representation which is made of things in the Holy Scriptures?

The Scriptures represent the damned as thrown away of God; as things that are good for nothing; and which God makes no account of; Matt. xiii. 48. As dross, and not gold and silver, or any valuable metal; Psalm cxix. 119. "Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth as dross." So Ezek. xxii. 18. Jer. vi. 28—30.; as salt that has lost its savour; as good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men; as stubble that is left, and as the chaff thrown out to be scattered by the wind, and go whither that shall happen to carry it, instead of being gathered and laid up as that which is of any value. Psalm i. 4. Job xxi. 18. and xxxv. 5.; as that which shall be thrown away as wholly worthless, as chaff and stubble and tares; all which are thrown away as not worthy of any care to save them; yea, are thrown into the fire, to be burnt up as mere nuisances, as fit for nothing but to be destroyed, and therefore are cast into the fire to be destroyed and done with. Matt. iii. 12. and xii. 30.; Job xxi. 18.; as barren trees, trees that are good for nothing; and not only so, but cumberers of the ground; and, as such, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire. Matt. iii. 10. and vii. 19. Luke xiii. 7.; as barren branches in a vine, that are cut off and cast away; as good for nothing, and gathered and burned. John xv. 6. as

thrown out and purged away as the filth of the world. Thus, it is said, Job xx. 7. "That the wicked shall perish for ever, as his own dung." They are spoken of as those that shall be spued out of God's mouth; as thrown into the lake of fire; as the great sink of all the filth of the creation; Rev. xxi. "But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their share in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone." As briars and thorns, that are not only wholly worthless in a field, but hurtful and pernicious; and are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned; Heb. vi. *i. e.* the husbandman throws them into the fire, and so has done with them for ever. He does not still take care of them, in order to make them fruitful and flourishing plants in his garden of delights. The wicked, it is said, shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world; Job xviii. 18. Instead of being treated by God with benevolence, chastening them with the compassion and kindness of a father, for their great and everlasting good, they, at that day, when God shall gather his children together, to make them experience the blessed fruits of the love of an heavenly Father, shall be shut out as dogs; Rev. xxi. 7, 8. with chap. xxii. 14, 15. And are represented as vessels to dishonour, vessels of wrath, fit for nothing else, but to contain wrath and misery. They are spoken of as those that perish and lose their souls; that are lost; (2 Cor. iv. 4.) Those that lose themselves and are cast away; those that are destroyed, consumed, &c.—which representations do not agree with such as are under a dispensation of kindness, and the means of a physician, in order to their eternal life, health and happiness, though the means are severe. When God, of old, by his prophets, denounced his terrible judgments against Jerusalem and the people of Israel, against Moab, Tyre, Egypt, Assyria, &c. which judgments, though long continued, were not designed to be perpetual; there were mixed with those awful denunciations, or added to them, promises or intimations of future mercy. But, when the Scripture speaks of God's dealings with ungodly men in another world, there are nothing but declarations and denunciations of wrath and misery, and no intimations of mercy; no gentle terms used, no significations of divine pity, no exhortations to humiliation under God's awful hand, or calls to seek his face and favour, and turn and repent. The account that the Scripture gives of the treatment that wicked men shall meet with after this life, is very inconsistent with the notion of their being from necessity sub-

jected to harsh means of cure, and severe chastisement, with a benevolent, gracious design of their everlasting good; particularly the manner in which Christ will treat them at the day of judgment. He will bid the wicked depart from him as cursed.

§ 23. We have no account of any invitations to accept of mercy; any counsels to repent, that they may speedily be delivered from this misery. But it is represented that then they shall be made his footstool. He shall triumph over them. He will trample upon them as men are wont to tread grapes in a wine-press, when they trample with all their might, to that very end that they may effectually crush them in pieces. He will tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury, and, as he says, their blood shall be sprinkled on his garments, and he will stain all his raiment, Isaiah lxiii. at the beginning; Rev. xiv. 19, 20. and chap. xix. 15. in which last place it is said, he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. These things do not savour of chastening with compassion and benevolence, and as still prosecuting a design of love toward them, that he may in the end actually be their saviour, and the means of their eternal glory. There is nothing in the account of the day of judgment, that looks as though saints had any love or pity for the wicked, on account of the terrible long-continued torments which they must suffer. Nor indeed will the accounts that are given, admit of supposing any such thing. We have an account of their judging them, and being with Christ in condemning them, concurring in the sentence, wherein he bids them begone from him as cursed with devils into eternal fire; but no account of their praying for them, nor of their exhorting them to consider and repent.

They shall not be grieved, but rather rejoice at the glorious manifestations of God's justice, holiness and majesty in their dreadful perdition, and shall triumph with Christ; Rev. xviii. 20. and xix. at the beginning. They shall be made Christ's footstool, and so they shall be the footstool of the saints. Psalm lxviii. 23. "That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same." If the damned were the objects of divine benevolence, and designed by God for the enjoyment of his eternal love, doubtless it would be required of all God's children to

love them, and to pity them, and pray for them, and seek their good; as here in this world it is required of them to love their enemies, to be kind to the evil and unjust; and to pity and pray for the vilest of men, that were their own persecutors, because they are the subjects of God's mercy in many respects, and are fit objects of infinite divine mercy and love. If Christ, the head of all the church, pities the damned and seeks their good, doubtless his members ought to do so too. If the saints in heaven ought to pity the damned, as well as the saints on earth are obligated to pity the wicked that dwell here; doubtless their pity ought to be in some proportion to the greatness of the calamities of the objects of it, and the greatness of the number of those they see in misery. But if they had pity and sympathizing grief in such measure as this, for so many ages, what an alloy would it be to their happiness! God is represented as whetting his glittering sword, bending his bow, and making ready his arrows on the string against wicked men, and lifting his hand to heaven, and swearing, that he will render vengeance to his enemies, and reward them that hate him, and make his arrows drunk with their blood, and that his sword shall devour their flesh. Deut. xxxii. 40, 41, 42. and Psalm vii. 11, 12, 13. Certainly this is the language and conduct of an enemy, not of a friend, or of a compassionate chastising father.

§ 24. The *degree* of misery and torment that shall be inflicted, is an evidence, that God is not acting the part of benevolence and compassion, and only chastening from a kind and gracious principle and design. It is evident, that it is God's manner, when he thus afflicts men for their good, and chastens them with compassion, to stay his rough wind in the day of his east wind; to correct in measure; to consider the frame of those that are corrected; to remember their weakness, and to consider how little they can bear. He turns away his anger, and does not stir up all his wrath. Psalm lxxviii. 37, 38, 39. Isa. xxvii. 8. Jer. xxx. 11. and xlvi. 28. And it is his manner, in the midst even of the severest afflictions, to order some mitigating circumstances, and to mix some mercy. But the misery of the damned is represented as unmixed. The wine of the wrath of God is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, that they may be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever, and they have no rest. day

nor night. Rev. xiv. 10, 11. They are tormented in a flame that burns within them, as well as round about them, and they shall be denied so much as a drop of water to cool their tongues. And God's wrath shall be inflicted in such a manner, as to shew his wrath, and make his strength known on the vessels of wrath, and which shall be punished with everlasting destruction, answerable to that glory of Christ's power in which he shall appear at the day of judgment, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with power and great glory, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel. Can any imagine, that in all this God is only correcting from love, and that the subjects of these inflictions are some of those happy ones whom God corrects in order to teach them out of his law? whom he makes sore, and bindeth up? Job v. 17, 18. Psalm xciv. 12. There is nothing in Scripture that looks as if the damned were under the use of means to bring them to repentance. It is apparent that God's manner is, when he afflicts men to bring to repentance by affliction, to join instructions, admonitions and arguments to persuade.

But if we judge by scripture representations of the state of the damned, they are left destitute of all these things.— There are no prophets, or ministers, or good men, to admonish them, to reason and expostulate with them, or to set them good examples. There is a perfect separation made betwixt all the righteous and the wicked by a great gulf; so that there can be no passing from one to the other. They are left wholly to the company of devils, and others like them. When the rich man in hell cries to his father Abraham, begging a drop of water, he denies his request; and adds no exhortation to repentance. Wisdom is abundantly represented in the book of Proverbs, as counselling, warning, calling, inviting, and expostulating with such as are under means for the obtaining wisdom, and as waiting upon them in the use of means, that they may turn at her reproof. But as to such as are obstinate under these means of grace and calls of wisdom, till the time of their punishment comes, it is represented, that their fear shall come as desolation, and destruction as a whirlwind; that distress and anguish shall come upon them; and that then it will be in vain for them to seek wisdom: That if they seek her early, they shall not find her, and if they call upon her, she will not hear; but instead of this, will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh: Which certainly does not consist with the idea that the God of wisdom is still striving

with them, and using means, in a benevolent and compassionate manner, to bring them to seek and embrace wisdom; still offering wisdom with all her unspeakable benefits, if they will hearken to her voice and comply with her counsel. Is wisdom then actually using the most powerful and effectual means to bring them to this happiness, even such as shall surely be successful, though they have obstinately refused all others, and when wisdom called, they heretofore refused, when she stretched forth her hand, they did not regard? Is he still most effectually acting the part of a friend, to deliver them from their distress and anguish, instead of laughing at their calamity? Prov. i. latter end. This declaration of wisdom, if it ever be fulfilled at all, will surely be fulfilled most completely and perfectly at the time appointed for obstinate sinners to receive their most perfect and complete punishment.

If all mankind, even such as live and die in their wickedness, are and ever will be the objects of Christ's good will and mercy, and those whose eternal happiness he desires and seeks; then surely he would pray for all: but Christ declares that there are some that he prays not for. John xvii. 9. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Compared with ver. 14. "The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." ver. 25. "The world hath not known thee, but I have known thee; and these have known that thou hast sent me;" and ver. 20. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." By this it appears that Christ prayed for all that should ever be true believers.— But he prayed not for those who should not be brought by the word of the apostles, and such means of grace as are used in this world, to believe in him, and should continue notwithstanding not to know God, and in enmity against true holiness or christianity. These were such as Christ prayed not for.

§ 25. If sin and misery, and the second death, are to continue and prevail for so long a time after the day of judgment, with respect to great multitudes that Christ will finally save and deliver from those things, having perfectly conquered and abolished them; then how can the Scriptures truly represent, that all enemies shall be put under his feet at the end of the world, and that the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death; and that then, having perfectly subdued all his enemies, he shall resign up the kingdom to the Father, and he

himself be subject to the Father? as in 1 Cor. xv. 20—28. The time of Christ's victory over death will be at the general resurrection and day of judgment, as is evident by ver. 54. with the foregoing context. The chief enemies that Christ came to destroy, with regard to such as should be saved, and be of his church, were *sin* and *misery*, or death consisting in sin, and death consisting in suffering the second death, unspeakably the greatest enemy that came by sin, infinitely more terrible than temporal death. But if the notion I am opposing be true, these greatest and worst enemies, instead of being subdued, shall have their principal reign afterwards, for many ages at least; viz. sin in the sad effect and consequence of it, men's misery; and God shall have his strongest conflict with those enemies afterward; that is, shall strive against them in the use of the most powerful means.

§ 26. There is a great evidence, that the *devil* is not the subject of any dispensation of divine mercy and kindness, and that God is prosecuting no design of infinite goodness towards him, and that his pains are not purifying pains. It is manifest, that, instead of any influence of his torments to bring him nearer to repentance, he has been from the beginning of his damnation, constantly, with all his might, exerting himself in prosecuting his wickedness, his violent, most haughty, and malignant opposition to God and man; fighting especially with peculiar virulence against Christ and his church; opposing with all his might, every thing that is good; seeking the destruction and misery of all mankind, with boundless and insatiable cruelty; on which account he is called Satan, the adversary, and Abaddon and Apollyon, the destroyer. He is represented as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, a viper, the old serpent, the great red dragon, red, on account of his bloody cruel nature. He is said to be a murderer from the beginning. He has murdered all mankind, has murdered their souls as well as their bodies. He was the murderer of Jesus Christ, by instigating Judas and his crucifiers. He has most cruelly shed the blood of an innumerable multitude of the children of God. He is emphatically called the evil one, that wicked one, &c. He is a liar, and the father of lies, and the father of all the sin and wickedness that is, or ever has been, in the world. He is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. It is said, that he that committeth sin is of the devil. For the devil sinneth from the beginning; and all wicked men are spoken of as his chil-

dren. He has set up himself as God of this world, in opposition to the true God, and has erected a vast kingdom over the nations; and is constantly carrying on a war with the utmost earnestness, subtilty, malice and venom, against Jesus Christ, and all his holy and gracious designs; maintaining a kingdom of darkness, wickedness and misery, in opposition to Christ's kingdom of light, holiness and peace; and thus will continue to do, till the end of the world, as appears by Scripture prophecies.

§ 27. And God's dealings with him are infinitely far from being those of a *friend*, kindly seeking his infinite good, and designing nothing else in the end, but to make him eternally happy in love and favour, and blessed union with him. God is represented every where as acting the part of an enemy to him, that seeks and designs nothing in the final event but his destruction. The grand work of God's providence, which he is prosecuting from the beginning to the end of the world, viz. the work of redemption, is against him, to bruise or break in pieces his head, to cast him like lightning from heaven, from that height of power and dominion to which he has exalted himself, to tread him under foot, and to cause his people to trample and bruise, or crush him under foot, and gloriously to triumph over him. Christ, when he conquered him, made a shew of him openly, triumphing over him. And, it is evident, that, as it will be with the devil in this respect, so it will be with the wicked. This is reasonable to suppose, from what the Scripture represents of the relation wicked men stand in to the devil as his children, servants, subjects, instruments, and his property and possession. They are all ranked together with him in one kingdom, in one interest, and one company. And many of them are the great ministers of his kingdom, and to whom he has committed authority; such as the beast and false prophet that we read of in the Revelation. Now, how reasonable and natural is it to suppose, that those who are thus united should have their portion and lot together? As Christ's disciples, subjects, followers, soldiers, children, instruments and faithful ministers, shall have their part with him in his eternal glory; so we may reasonably believe, that the devil's disciples, followers, subjects, soldiers in his army, his children, instruments and ministers of his kingdom, should have their part with him, and not that such an infinite difference should be made between them, that the punishment of the one should be eternal, and that of the other but temporal,

and therefore infinitely less, infinitely disproportionate; so that the proportion between the punishment of the latter, and that of the former, is as nothing, infinitely less than an unit to a million of millions. This is unreasonable to be supposed in itself, as the difference of guilt and wickedness cannot be so great, but must be infinitely far from it; especially, considering the aggravations of the wickedness of a great part of damned men, as committed against Christ, and gospel grace and love; which exceeding great aggravation the sin of the devils never had.

§ 28. As the devil's ministers, servants and instruments, of the angelic nature, those that are called the devil's angels, shall have their part with him; for the like reason we may well suppose, his servants, and instruments of the human nature, will share with him. And not only is this reasonable in itself, but the Scripture plainly teaches us that it shall be so. In Rev. xix. 20. it is said, "The beast and the false prophet were both cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone." So it is said, chap xx. 16. "The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."—thus expressing both the kind of misery and the duration. Just in the same manner it is said concerning the followers of the beast. It is said, chap. xiv. 9, 10, 11. "Saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast, &c.—the same shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night."—And chap. xxi. 8. of wicked men in general, it is said, they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.—So we find in Christ's description of the day of judgment, the wicked are sentenced to everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. By which it appears most plainly, that they share with the devils in suffering misery of the same kind, and also share with him in suffering misery of the same everlasting continuance. And, indeed, not only would the punishment infinitely differ as to quantity and duration, if the punishment of the devils was to be eternal, and of wicked men only temporal; but, if this were known, it would, as it were, infinitely differ in kind. The one suffering God's hatred and mere vengeance, inflictions that have no pity or kindness in them; the other, the fruit of his mercy and love, and infinitely kind intention: the one attended with absolute despair, and

a black and dismal sinking prospect of misery, absolutely endless; the other with the light of hope, and a supporting prospect, not only of an end to their misery, but of an eternal unspeakable happiness to follow. According to the notion which I am opposing, the judgment that shall take place at the end of the world, will be so far from being the last judgment, or any proper judgment to settle all things in their final state, that it will, with respect to the wicked, be no more than the judgment of a physician, whether more sharp and powerful remedies must not be applied in order to the relief of sinners, and the cure of their disease, which, if not cured, will make them eternally miserable!

§ 29. It is evident, that the future misery of the wicked in hell is not to come to an end, and to be succeeded by eternal happiness; and that their misery is not subservient to their happiness, because the Scripture plainly signifies, concerning those that die in their sins, that they have all the good and comfort in *this life*, that ever is designed for them. Luke vi. 24. "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." Luke xvi. 25. "Son, remember that thou in thy *lifetime* receivedst thy good things." Psal. xvii. 13, 14. "Deliver my soul from the wicked—from the men of the world which have their portion in *this life*, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure."

§ 30. According to the opinion I am now opposing, God will surely at the last deliver all the damned from their misery, and make them happy. So that God will see to it, that the purifying torments shall certainly at last have their effect, to turn them from sin. Now, how can this consist with God's treating them as moral agents, and their acting from the freedom of their own wills, in the affair of their turning from sin, and becoming morally pure and virtuous, according to the notions of freedom and moral agency which now prevail, and are strenuously maintained by some of the chief assertors of this opinion concerning hell torments; which notion of freedom implies contingency, and is wholly inconsistent with the necessity of the event? If after all the torments used to bring sinners to repentance, the consequence aimed at, viz. their turning from sin to virtue, be not necessary, but it shall still remain a contingent event, whether there ever will be any such consequence of those severe, long continued chastisements or no; then, how can it be determined, that this

will surely be the consequence? How can it be a thing infallible, that such a consequence of means used will follow, when at the same time, it is not a consequence any way necessarily connected with the means used, it being only a thing contingent whether it will follow or not? If God has determined absolutely to make them all pure and happy, and yet their purity and happiness depends on the freedom of their will; then here is an absolute, divine decree, consistent with the freedom of men's will, which is a doctrine utterly rejected by the generality of that sort of men who deny the eternity of hell torments. If it be said, that God has not absolutely determined the duration or measure of their torments, but intends to continue them till they do repent, or to try lesser torments first, and, if these do not answer, to increase them till they are effectual, determining that he will raise or continue them till the effect shall finally and infallibly follow; that is the same thing as to necessitate the effect. And here is necessity in such a case, as much as when a founder puts a piece of metal in a furnace, with a resolution to melt it, and if continuing it there a little while will not dissolve it, that he will keep it there till it does dissolve: and if, by reason of its peculiar hardness, an ordinary degree of heat of the furnace will not be effectual, that he will increase the vehemence of the heat, till the effect shall certainly follow.

§ 31. If any should maintain this scheme of temporary future punishments, viz. that the torments in hell are not purifying pains, and that the damned are not in a state of trial with regard to any expected admission to eternal happiness, and that therefore they are not the proper objects of divine benevolence; that the dispensation they are under, is not truly a dispensation of mercy, but that their torments are properly penal pains, wherein God displays his vindictive justice; that they shall suffer misery to such a degree, and for so long a time as their obstinate wickedness in this world *deserves*; and that indeed they shall be miserable a very long time, so long, that it is often figuratively spoken of in Scripture as being everlasting, and that then they shall be annihilated: On this I would observe, that there is nothing got by such a scheme; no relief from the arguments taken from Scripture, for the proper eternity of future punishment. For, if it be owned, that Scripture expressions denote a punishment that is properly eternal, but that it is in no other sense properly

so, than as the annihilation, or state of non-existence to which the wicked shall return, will be eternal; and that this eternal annihilation is that death which is so often threatened for sin, *perishing for ever, everlasting destruction*, being lost, utterly consumed, &c. and that the fire of hell is called eternal fire, in the same sense that the external fire which consumed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is called eternal fire, Jude 7. because it utterly consumed those cities, that they might never be built more; and that this fire is called that which cannot be quenched, or at least not until it has destroyed them that are cast into it — If this be all that these expressions denote, then they do not at all signify the length of the torments, or long continuance of their misery; so that the supposition of the length of their torments is brought in without any necessity, the Scripture saying nothing of it, having no respect to it, when it speaks of their everlasting punishments: and it answers the Scripture expressions as well, to suppose that they shall be annihilated immediately, without any long pains, provided the annihilation be everlasting.

§ 32. If any should suppose, that the torments of the damned in hell are properly penal, and in execution of penal justice, but yet that they are neither eternal, nor shall end in annihilation, but shall be continued till justice is satisfied, and they have truly suffered as much as they deserve, whereby their punishment shall be so long as to be called everlasting, but that then they shall be delivered, and finally be the subjects of everlasting happiness; and that therefore they shall not in the mean time be in a state of trial, nor will be waited upon in order to repentance, nor will their torments be used as means to bring them to it; for that the term and measure of their punishment shall be fixed, from which they shall not be delivered on repentance, or any terms or conditions whatsoever, until justice is satisfied: I would observe, in answer to this, that if it be so, the damned, while under their suffering, are either answerable for the wickedness that is acted by them while in that state, or may properly be the subjects of a judicial proceeding for it, or not. If the former be supposed, then it will follow, that they must have another state of suffering and punishment, after the ages of their suffering for the sins of this life are ended. And it cannot be supposed, that this second period of suffering will be shorter than the first: For the first is only for the sins committed during a short life, often represented in Scripture, for its shortness, to be a

dream, a tale that is told, a blast of wind, a vapour, a span, a moment, &c. But the time of punishment is always represented as exceeding long, called everlasting; represented as enduring for ever and ever, as having no end, &c. If the sins of a moment must be followed with such punishment, then, doubtless, the sins of those endless ages, must be followed with another second period of suffering, much longer. For it must be supposed, that the damned continue sinning all the time of their punishment; for none can rationally imagine, that God would hold them under such extreme torments, and terrible manifestations and executions of his wrath, after they have thoroughly repented, and turned from sin, and are become pure and holy, and conformed to God, and so have left off sinning. And if they continue in sin during this state of punishment, with assurance that God still has a great benevolence for them, even so as to intend finally to make them everlastingly happy in the enjoyment of his love, then their sin must be attended with great aggravation; as they will have the evil and ill desert of sin set before them in the most affecting manner, in their dreadful sufferings for it, attended besides with evidence that God is infinitely benevolent towards them, and intends to bestow infinite blessings upon them.— But, if this first long period of punishment must be followed with a second as long, or longer; for the same reason, the second must be followed by a third, as long, or longer than that; and so the third must be followed by a fourth, and so *in infinitum*; and, at this rate, there never can be an end of their misery. So this scheme overthrows itself.

§ 33. And if the damned are not answerable for the wickedness they commit during their state of punishment, then we must suppose that, during the whole of their long, and, as it were, eternal state of punishment, they are given up of God to the most unrestrained wickedness, having this to consider, that how far soever they go in the allowed exercises and manifestations of their malice and rage against God and Christ, saints and angels, and their fellow damned spirits, they have nothing to fear from it, it will be never the worse; and surely, continuing in such unrestrained wickedness, for such duration, must most desperately confirm the habit of sin, must increase the root and fountain of it in the heart. Now, how unreasonable is it to suppose, that God would thus deal with such as were objects of his infinite kindness, and the appointed subjects of the unspeakable and endless fruits of his love, in a

state of perfect holiness and purity, and conformity to and union with himself; thus to give them up beforehand to unrestrained malignity against himself, and every kind of hellish wickedness, as it were infinitely to increase the fountain of sin in the heart, and the strength of the principle and habit? Now, how incongruous is it to suppose, with regard to those for whom God has great benevolence, and designs eternal favour, that he would lay them under a necessity of extreme, unbounded hatred of him, blasphemy and rage against him, for so many ages; such necessity as should exclude all liberty of their own in the case? If God intends not only punishment, but purification by these torments; on this supposition, instead of their being purified, they must be set at an infinitely greater distance from purification. And if God intends them for a second time of probation, in order to their being brought to repentance and the love of God after their punishment is finished; then how can it be certain beforehand, that they shall finally be happy, as is supposed? How can it be certain they will not fail in their second trial, or in their third, if there be a third? Yea, how much more likely, that they will fail of truly turning in heart from sin to the love of God, in their second trial, if there be any proper trial in the case, after their hearts have been so much more brought under the power of a strong habit of sin and enmity to God? If the habit proved so strong in this life, that the most powerful means and mighty inducements of the gospel would not prevail, so that God was, as it were, under a necessity of cutting them down and dealing thus severely with them; how much less likely will it be, that they will be prevailed upon to love God and the ways of virtue, after their hearts are set at so much greater distance from those things? Yea, unless we suppose a divine interposition of almighty, efficacious power, to change the heart in the time of this second trial, we may be sure that, under these circumstances, the heart will not turn to love God.

§ 34. And besides, if they are laid under such a necessity of hating and blaspheming God, for so many ages, in the manner that has been spoken of, how extremely incongruous is such an imagination, that God would lay those he intended for the eternal bounty and blessedness of dear children, under such circumstances, that they must necessarily hate him, and with devilish fury curse and blaspheme him for innumerable ages, and yet never have cause, even when they are delivered and made happy in God's love, to condemn themselves for it,

though they see the infinite hatefulness and unreasonableness of it, because God laid them under such a necessity, that they could use no liberty of their own in the case? I leave it for all to judge, whether God's thus ordering things, with regard to such as, from great benevolence, he intended for eternal happiness in a most blessed union with himself, be credible.

§ 35. The same disposition and habit of mind, and manner of viewing things, is indeed the main ground of the cavils of many of the modern free-thinkers, and modish writers, against the extremity and eternity of hell torments, if relied upon, would cause them to be dissatisfied with almost any thing that is very uncomfortable in a future punishment, so much as the enduring of the pain that is occasioned by the thrusting of a thorn under the nail of the finger, for a whole year together, day and night, without any rest, or the least intermission or abatement. There are innumerable calamities that come to pass in this world, through the permission and ordination of divine providence, against which (were it not that they are what we see with our eyes, and are universally known and incontestable facts) this cavilling unbelieving spirit would strongly object; and, if they were only proposed in theory as matters of faith, would be opposed as exceedingly inconsistent with the moral perfections of God; and the opinions of such as asserted them would be cried out against, as in numberless ways contrary to God's wisdom, his justice, goodness, mercy, &c.—such as, the innumerable calamities that have happened to poor innocent children, through the merciless cruelty of barbarous enemies; their being gradually roasted to death, shrieking and crying for their fathers and mothers; the extreme pains they sometimes are tormented with, by terrible diseases which they suffer; the calamities that have many times been brought on whole cities, while besieged, and when taken by merciless soldiers, destroying all, men, women and children, without any pity; the extreme miseries which have been suffered by millions of innocent persons, of all ages, sexes and conditions, in times of persecution, when there has been no refuge to be found on earth; yea, those things that come to pass universally, of which all mankind are the subjects, in temporal death, which is so dreadful to nature.

CHAP. III.

CONCERNING THE DIVINE DECREES IN GENERAL, AND ELECTION IN PARTICULAR.

§ 1. WHETHER God has decreed all things that ever came to pass or not, all that own the being of a God, own that he *knows* all things *before hand*. Now, it is self-evident, that if he knows all things beforehand, he either doth *approve* of them, or he doth *not* approve of them; that is, he either is *willing* they should be, or he is *not* willing they should be. But to *will* that they should be, is to *decree* them.*

* Were the true ORIGIN of moral evil, that is, the *ad-quate* reason of its taking place as a consequence, more generally known, there would be less unprofitable disputing about the divine decrees in general, and about predestination and election in particular. It is to the want of this knowledge that we must ascribe many things advanced by ancient as well as modern writers who, in other important respects, are truly valuable and judicious. Our excellent author appears never less at home, than when he touches upon those points which are immediately connected with that knowledge; and his reasoning in the short section to which this note refers, is a striking specimen. The conclusion he draws is true in one sense, but not in another. It is applicable only to real entities, while it does not affect negative causations, and consequences flowing from them. That God "knows before hand" all things (whether of a positive or negative kind) is an important truth; but things coming to pass, or not coming to pass, is no proper criterion of his "approving" or "not approving them." He may *approve* of what does *not* come to pass, and he may *not* approve of what *does*. He approves of all *possible* excellencies, and he disapproves of all *possible* moral evil. But who will say that there are as many excellencies among creatures, or as much moral evil, as it is *possible* there might be?

When it is said, "he either is willing they should be, or he is not willing they should be," the terms require a distinction, and the sentiment an explanation. If by "they" or "things" be meant *real entities*, it is very proper to say, that "God is either *willing* they should be, or *not* willing they should be;" and if the *former*, they must exist from his will, and therefore are decreed; but if the *latter*, they must not exist, for there is no other adequate cause of their existence. But this reasoning is not valid when applied to negations and defects. For there are multitudes of things, (as all failings, wants, and negative considerations) concerning which there is no decretive will exercised for their existence, (if existence it may be called) nor yet any contrary will to prevent their existence. What intelligent person can suppose, for instance, that a mathematical point, a *relative nothing*, was

§ 2. The Arminians ridicule the distinction between the secret and revealed will of God, or, more properly expressed, the distinction between the decree and law of God; because

decreed either to be or not to be? and yet, when it stands related to real entities which are decreed, what innumerable demonstrative consequences follow from it?

By whomsoever sanctioned, it is an erroneous notion, that a decretive will is implied in, or is at all requisite for the production of a negative cause. It is not less erroneous, than to suppose, that negative causes may produce real entities. That the latter is an erroneous notion, may be easily made to appear. Millions of inhabited systems are among possible effects, but who would say that there must be a decretive will, or any will, to prevent their existence? Would they start into being of themselves, if not prevented by an act of will? To suppose that an exercise of divine will is requisite for confirming the negative consideration of their non-existence, is an absurd idea, except these ideal possibles had an inherent tendency towards actual existence of themselves. And as there is no will requisite to prevent their existence, so neither is there any required to continue their non-existence. But though a negative cause, like a mathematical point, be a relative nothing, yet, on the supposition of existing free agents, in given circumstances, millions of sins would come to pass, more than do in fact, were they not prevented by a counteracting will. This counteraction is very properly termed "restraining, or preventing grace;" for the object of a decree which counteracts evil, is the positive existence of an opposite good. And if moral evil be the object of prevention, it must be prevented by divine gracious will and influence, which counteracts the operation of that negative principle in the agent, from which the moral evil takes its origin. Therefore, our author's conclusion, "to will that they should be, is to decree them," applies only to one sort of "things," viz. real entities; but negative considerations, defects, and moral evils, no more imply a decree concerning their causation, and their appropriate consequences, than does absolute nonexistence imply it.

The true notion of moral evil, or the *sinfulness* of a free act, is the *absence* or the *want* of conformity to rectitude. And if God were the decretive cause of moral evil, by "willing it should be," the will of the agent would be only the instrument of the first will in producing an intended or decreed event. But if such event be decreed, and if there be no cause of failure in the agent but what is decreed, it is impossible to avoid the consequence that God is the primary author of sin. And how could he hate and blame the effect of his own causation, any more than he hates natural evils, or blames volcanoes and storms, diseases and death? He is never said, or even supposed, to hate or blame these, because he is the primary source of them, according to established laws and instruments of his own appointment. If moral evil were decreed by him, he must be the *efficient* of it; for whatever he decrees, he effects; and notwithstanding any kind whatever of instrumentality in its production—the human will or any thing else—he could no more disapprove of it, than he does of lightning and earthquakes.

But if "Willing they should be" denote, *not exercising* a will to prevent moral evils, the expression is inappropriate, and implies a contradiction. For a decree implies the *exercise* of will; but *not exercising* a preventing will (by which alone the event can be arrested) is an idea directly contrary; and the two ideas are absolutely incompatible. The same intelligent cause indeed may produce effects *different* from itself; and this *must* be the case, as cause and effect cannot be identified, (for identity is that which *excludes* difference) but the same intelligent cause cannot produce effects *contrary* to itself. All the decrees of God are *holy*, like himself; but to suppose a decree of moral evil, is to suppose an effect *contrary* to its cause, which is to suppose incompatible ideas to be a truth. The

we say he may decree one thing, and command another. And so, they argue, we hold a contrariety in God, as if one will of his contradicted another. However, if they will call this

intervention of a *secondary* will make no real difference, if there be not *another* cause of failure in the act, totally different from decretive will.

But is there any adequate cause, or *sufficient reason* of the consequence, why moral evil takes place, if we exclude a divine decree of it? Most assuredly there is; as sure as all the decrees of God, and the exercise of those decrees, are holy; and as sure as moral evil is an effect which he blames and infinitely hates. And this cause is of such a nature that if God decrees *one kind* of good, but not *another* also, moral evil is certain to follow. That is, if he decree the existence of an active will, in perfect liberty from constraint to evil, together with a variety of objects, all of which are good in themselves; but at the same time has *not* decreed preserving grace—a continued holy influence enlightening and purifying the mind—the intellect will be *certain* (as *chance* is out of the question) to give a defective representation of good, because it is necessarily connected with the source of failure, viz. comparative defect, and therefore the want of infallibility. If the choice be *right* and virtuous, it is the infallible index of two good things decreed, the natural act, and a holy principle in the *heart*, which is the source of moral actions. If the choice be *wrong* and vicious, it is also an infallible index of two things, the natural act which is good, and therefore decreed, and a principle of limitation and failure, which neither is nor can be an object of decree. This negative principle in *fallen* angels and men is intimately connected and intermixed with moral depravity, yet in itself, abstractedly considered, it is not sinful, but is the cause of all sinfulness. It is an essential property of creatures in every state of their existence, and therefore cannot be in itself sinful; nor is it possible for any thing *sinful* to be the *origin* of sin, for then sin would be the origin of itself, or self-existent, which is infinitely absurd. How can the same thing be both *before* and *after* itself?

Here it may be asked, if the *origin* of moral evil be not itself sinful, why may not God be its origin? The reason is plain, because God is absolute perfection, and has not in him a principle of defection, and therefore it is impossible for him to impart what he has not. He can no more impart *imperfection*, than he can impart *falsehood*. Why is he a God that *cannot* lie? Because he is absolute truth. Why cannot he impart imperfection, or decree sinfulness? Because he is absolute goodness and holiness. But though that principle which is the *origin* of sin is not *sinful*, it is not a perfection, in any sense, but a *relative defect*. This is its real character, and such character must necessarily be the *origin* of moral evil. Were it sinful, it could not be the *cause* of sin, for this would be absurdly to identify the cause and the effect, or to ascribe to imperfection, the perfection of self-existence. And were it a perfection, or something that was not an imperfection, the effect would be *contrary* to the tendency of its cause, which would be to subvert the first principles of knowledge, reason and truth.

Moral evil, which is the sinfulness of a free act, is a *defect*, a *failure* of conformity to rectitude, and therefore, though a source of misery to the subject of it, (a misery generated by the defect itself) it can no more be *caused* by the divine will, than pure nihilty, or a mathematical point, can be so caused. The *entity* of the free act is indeed effected by divine will and energy, operating on a *secondary* cause, but this constitutes no part of its defect, its failure of conformity, or *sinfulness*. Thus the very *nature* of sin proves that the divine will neither is, nor can possibly be, the cause of it. To suppose that God decrees, or any way wills a *defect*, or a failure of perfection of any kind, is even more absurd, than to suppose that he decrees mere nihilty; because it involves more absurd consequences,

a contradiction of wills, we know that there is such a thing : so that it is the greatest absurdity to dispute about it. We and they know it was God's secret will, that Abraham should

when compared with his declared *opposition* to sin. Though he counteracts nihility by actual creation, and providential preservation, it is no object of blame or holy hatred, as moral evil is.

As the point under discussion, though deep, is far from being a mere speculation which has no practical advantage—but has an extensive influence on many important theological subjects, and on the rational ground of experimental religion—it may be advantageous to view it in different lights. Still, it may be asked by some, if moral evil does not take place because “God wills it should be,” whence does it originate? It may be replied, its *immediate* origination is a moral agent's *abuse* of his free will; or of his will acting freely, without restraint from good, or constraint to evil. But the question still returns, What is the *ultimate* cause of that *abuse*? Every one must allow that, as an effect, it must have *some* cause, some adequate reason *why* it takes place in a moral system; and it must be further allowed that this cannot be *chance*, or absolute contingency, for then there would be no ground of its being foreknown. To foreknow what is *in itself* uncertain, is a direct contradiction; and a contradictory position cannot be an object of *foreknowledge*, because it cannot be an object of *any* knowledge, except as a falsehood. To attempt an evasion of this argument by recurring to the *infinite* of the divine knowledge, is a weak subterfuge; for if any thing be *in itself uncertain*, the more perfect the knowledge is, the more perfectly it is known to be *uncertain*. What is contingent with respect to us is only *relatively* so, because our knowledge is *limited*; but with respect to God, whose understanding is infinite, there is *nothing* contingent; that is, there is no *absolute* contingency, or mere chance, in the nature of things. There must therefore, of necessity, be an origin of moral evil, which is certainly foreknown, or foreknown as a certain fact. And it has been proved that it is not, and that it cannot possibly be, divinely caused; it must therefore originate in the creature, and in something of which he is the subject, which is not an object of divine causation.

It may still be objected, Is there any thing in a creature, as such, which is not divinely caused? If by “thing” be meant, what has positive existence, there certainly is not; but in another sense, there certainly is, otherwise there would be a creature without any *relative defect*, compared with the Creator. If he has no defect or imperfection of *any* kind, then the Creator and the creature must necessarily be *identified*. For what can constitute the *difference* between a caused and an uncaused being, if not the absolute perfection of the latter, and the comparative imperfection of the former? And this comparative imperfection cannot be *sinful*, otherwise there could be no creature without sin, which is absurd in thought, and contrary to revealed facts. This relative defect, which constitutes an essential difference between a derived and an underived existence, is an adequate (and indeed the only possible) origin of moral evil; but it is however only *hypothetical*, that is, on supposition that there is no decreed operation of a contrary principle to prevent the occurrence of moral evil as a consequence. And there can be no doubt that God actually does in millions of instances, “overcome this evil with good,” in preventing the inhabitants of this world from being worse than they are. That interrogation “Who hath made thee to differ from another?” is full of important meaning. It implies a strong affirmation, that *God alone* makes any man to *differ for the better* from another, and that no one has *any excellency*, either natural or spiritual, but what is a divine gift. But, on the other hand, the *agent alone* makes himself to *differ for the worse*, whether from others, or from his former self, otherwise he could not be the object of divine

not sacrifice his son Isaac; but yet his command was, that he should do it.

displeasure and blame. It is not, however, the *cause* of sin that is the object of blame and displeasure in the exercise of holy government, but the *sin* itself, and the person who commits it.

It is of little moment by what words, or in what language, this essential principle is expressed: whether by *passive power*, (perhaps the most significant and convenient as a technical term) comparative imperfection, the evil of imperfect existence, metaphysical evil, the want of ulterior perfection, an essential tendency to defection, &c. the thing itself, as possessing a *relative* influence in the demonstrations of moral science, is absolutely certain. If we reject it, nothing in *morality* can possibly be the subject of scientific demonstration, any more than in geometry, any proposition can be demonstrated if we reject that *relative nothing*, a *mathematical point*, which is implied in every diagram. But if we admit it, there is nothing important in *moral science* but is capable of being reduced to rigid and fair demonstration. It should however be carefully remembered, that though it is an adequate reason of the event, and is the only ultimate origin of moral evil as the consequence, it is suspended on this condition, "If the all-sufficient first cause do not communicate to the agent's mind a supporting holy influence." Grant the agent, (that is, a created and therefore a dependent agent) *active powers and freedom*, (that is, freedom from decretive constraint to an evil choice, and from restraint as to a good choice) and *nothing but sovereign or arbitrary goodness can, in the nature of things, (that is, in the nature of God and of the creature) prevent the consequence, moral evil*. What an argument for godly fear, profound humility, and constant dependence on God all sufficient; and what a proof of our need of gracious influence, (even abstracted from the additional consideration of our sinful apostacy) to keep us from sin; and considered as apostate creatures, what a powerful recommendation of a life of prayer, and the gospel system of salvation!

COROLLERIES.

1. Hence we may see that a decree of *good* does not imply a decree of *evil*—predestination to *life*, does not imply predestination to *death*—in other words, that a decree of *election*, does not imply a decree of *reprobation*, as maintained by some of the reformers. The 17th article of the church of England steers clear of this dangerous rock.

2. Since all the disputes between Calvinists and Arminians are founded in differing notions about the divine decrees and *free will*, and since these differing notions are thoroughly removed by a right knowledge of the origin of moral evil, which is capable of demonstrative evidence—we may infer, that in proportion as Calvinists and Arminians are capable of estimating absolute demonstration, their disagreement will be annihilated—and that nothing but ignorance and prejudice can prevent their harmonious coalition. O happy period, when all God's people shall "see eye to eye!"—Let the Calvinist, from full conviction, assure his opponent, that God decrees *only good*, whether *natura'*, *mora'*, or *spiritual*; but in no sense whatever decrees or any way wills moral evil—let him further state, that the origin or cause of moral evil is in the creature in such a manner as to be neither created nor willed by the author of our being, but yet is inseparably related to our existence—and let him further insist, that God could, if he saw it best, prevent by his grace the commission of sin, in every possible instance, while he leaves the human will perfectly free—and that to him alone we should look for assistance to enable us to avoid sin, as well as for pardon and acceptance—firmly persuaded of these things, on the clearest ground of evidence, let him invite his opponent to give him the right hand of fellowship—if, after all, the Arminian draws back, he must, in the view of every intelligent mind, appear either profoundly ignorant or most unreasonably bigoted. In this case, though not blameless, he should be the subject of pity and of prayer.—W.

§ 3. It is most certain, that if there are any things so contingent, that there is an equal possibility of their being or not being, so that they may be, or they may not be; God foreknows from all eternity that they may be, and also that they may not be. All will grant that we need no revelation to teach us this. And furthermore, if God knows all things that are to come to pass, he also foreknows whether those contingent things are to come to pass or no, at the same time that they are contingent, and that they may or may not come to pass. But what a contradiction is it to say, that God knows a thing will come to pass, and yet at the same time knows that it is contingent whether it will come to pass or no; that is, he certainly knows it will come to pass, and yet certainly knows it may not come to pass? What a contradiction is it to say, that God certainly foreknew that Judas would betray his master, or Peter deny him, and yet certainly knew that it might be otherwise, or certainly knew that he might be deceived? I suppose it will be acknowledged by all, that for God certainly to know a thing will be, and yet certainly to know that it may not be, is the same thing as certainly to know that he may be deceived. I suppose it will also be acknowledged, that certainly to know a thing, and also at the same time to know that we may be deceived in it, is the same thing as certainly to know it, and certainly to know that we are uncertain of it, or that we do not certainly know it: and that is the same thing as certainly to know it, and not certainly to know it at the same time; which we leave to be considered, whether it be not a contradiction.

§ 4. The meaning of the word *absolute*, when used about the decrees, wants to be stated. It is commonly said, God decrees nothing upon a foresight of any thing in the creature; as this, they say, argues imperfection in God; and so it does, taken in the sense that they commonly intend it. But nobody, I believe, will deny but that God decrees many things that he would not have decreed, if he had not foreknown and fore-determined such and such other things. What we mean, we completely express thus—That God decrees all things harmoniously, and in excellent order, one thing harmonizes with another, and there is such a relation between all the decrees, as makes the most excellent order. Thus God decrees rain in drought, and he also decrees the earnest prayers of his people, because he decrees rain. I acknowledge, to say, *God decrees a thing because*, is an improper way of speaking; but

not more improper than all our other ways of speaking about God. God decrees the latter event, because of the former, no more than he decrees the former, because of the latter. But this is what we mean—When God decrees to give the blessing of rain, he decrees the prayers of his people; and when he decrees the prayers of his people for rain, he very commonly decrees rain; and thereby there is an harmony between these two decrees, of rain, and the prayers of God's people. Thus also, when he decrees diligence and industry, he decrees riches and prosperity; when he decrees prudence, he often decrees success; when he decrees striving, then he often decrees the obtaining the kingdom of heaven; when he decrees the preaching of the gospel, then he decrees the bringing home of souls to Christ; when he decrees good natural faculties, diligence and good advantages, then he decrees learning; when he decrees Summer, then he decrees the growing plants; when he decrees conformity to his Son, then he decrees calling; when he decrees calling, then he decrees justification; and when he decrees justification, then he decrees everlasting glory. Thus, all the decrees of God are harmonious; and this is all that can be said for or against absolute or conditional decrees. But this I say, it is as improper to make one decree a condition of another, as to make the other a condition of that; but there is a harmony between both.

§ 5. As to such an absolute contingency, which they attribute to man's will, calling it the sovereignty of the will; if they mean by this sovereignty of will, that a man can will as he wills, it is perfect nonsense, and the same as if they should spend abundance of time and pains, and be very hot at proving, that a man can will what he doth will; that is, that it is possible for that to be, which is. But if they mean, that there is a perfect contingency in the will of man, that is, that it happens merely by chance that a man wills such a thing, and not another, it is an impossibility and contradiction, that a thing should be without any cause or reason, and when there was every way as much cause why it should not have been.

§ 6. Contingency, as it is holden by some, is at the same time contradicted by themselves, if they hold foreknowledge. This is all that follows from an absolute, unconditional, irreversible decree, that it is impossible but that the things de-

creed should be. The same exactly follows from foreknowledge, that it is absolutely impossible but that the thing certainly foreknown should precisely come to pass.

§ 7. They say, to what purpose are praying and striving, and attending on means, if all was irreversibly determined by God before? But, to say that all was determined before these prayers and strivings, is a very wrong way of speaking, and begets those ideas in the mind, which correspond with no realities with respect to God. The decrees of our everlasting state were not before those of our prayers and strivings: for these are as much present with God from all eternity, as they are the moment they are present with us. They are present as part of his decrees, or rather as the same; and they did as really exist in eternity, with respect to God, as they exist in time, and as much at one time as another. Therefore, we can no more fairly argue, that these will be in vain, because God has foredetermined all things, than we can, that they would be in vain if they existed as soon as the decree, for so they do, inasmuch as they are a part of it.

§ 8. When a distinction is made between God's revealed will and his secret will, or his will of command and decree, *will* is certainly in that distinction taken in two senses. His will of decree, is not his will in the same sense as his will of command is. Therefore, it is no difficulty at all to suppose, that the one may be otherwise than the other: His will in both senses is in his inclination. But when we say he wills virtue, or loves virtue, or the happiness of his creature; thereby is intended, that virtue, or the creature's happiness, absolutely and simply considered, is agreeably to the inclination of his nature. His will of decree, is his inclination to a thing, not as to that thing absolutely and simply, but with respect to the universality of things, that have been, are, or shall be. So God, though he has no inclination to a creature's misery, considered absolutely, yet he may will it, for the greater promotion of happiness in this universality. God inclines to excellency, which is harmony, but yet he may suffer that which is unharmonious in itself, for the promotion of the harmony there is in the universality of his glorious works. And thus it must needs be, and no hypothesis whatsoever will relieve a man, but that he must own these two wills of God.

§ 9. It is a proper and excellent thing for infinite glory to shine forth; and, for the same reason, it is proper that the shining forth of God's glory should be complete; that is, that all parts of his glory should shine forth, that every beauty should be proportionably effulgent; that the beholder may have a proper notion of God. It is not proper, that one glory should be exceedingly manifested, and another not at all; for then the effulgence would not answer the reality. For the same reason, it is not proper that one should be manifested exceedingly, and another but very little. It is highly proper, that the effulgent glory of God should answer his real excellency; that the splendour should be answerable to the real and essential glory; for the same reason that it is proper and excellent for God to glorify himself at all. Thus it is necessary, that God's awful majesty, his authority and dreadful greatness, justice and holiness, should be manifested. But this could not be, unless punishment had been decreed: so that the shining forth of God's glory would be very imperfect, both because these parts of divine glory would not shine forth as the others do, and also the glory of his goodness, love, and holiness, would be faint without them; nay, they could scarcely shine forth at all. If it were not right that God should permit and punish sin, there could be no manifestation of God's holiness in hatred of sin, or in showing any preference, in his providence, of godliness before it. There would be no manifestation of God's grace or true goodness, if there was no sin to be pardoned, no misery to be saved from. How much happiness soever he bestowed, his goodness would not be so much prized and admired, and the sense of it not so great. We little consider, how much the sense of good is heightened by the sense of evil, both moral and natural. And as it is necessary that there should be evil, because the display of the glory of God could not but be imperfect and incomplete without it, so evil is necessary, in order to the highest happiness of the creature, and the completeness of that communication of God, for which he made the world; because the creature's happiness consists in the knowledge of God, and a sense of his love. And if the knowledge of him be imperfect, the happiness of the creature must be proportionably imperfect: and the happiness of the creature would be imperfect upon another account also; for as we have said, the sense of good is comparatively dull and flat, without the knowledge of evil.

§ 10. I lay this down, which I suppose none will deny, that as to God's own actions, God decrees them, or purposes them beforehand. For none will be so absurd as to say, that God acts without intentions, or without designing to act, or that he forbears to act, without intending to forbear. And whatsoever God intends or purposes, he intends and purposes from all eternity; as there are no new purposes or intentions in God. For, if God sometimes begins to intend what he did not intend before, then two things will follow,

1. That God is not omniscient. If God sometimes begins to design what he did not design before, it must of necessity be for want of knowledge, or for want of knowing things before, as he knows them now; for want of having exactly the same views of things. If God begins to intend what he did not before intend, it must be because he now sees reasons to intend it, that he did not see before; or that he has something new objected to his understanding, to influence him.

2. If God begins to intend or purpose things that he did not intend before, then God is certainly mutable, and then he must in his own mind and will be liable to succession and change; for, wherever there are new things, there is succession and change. Therefore, I shall take these two things for positions granted and supposed in this controversy.

§ 11. "The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Psalm lxxvi. 10. If God restrains sin when he pleases; and when he permits it, permits it for the sake of some good that it will be an occasion of, and does actually restrain it in all other cases; it is evident that when he permits it, it is for the sake of the good of which it will be an occasion. If he permits it for the sake of that good, then he does not permit merely because he would infringe on the creature's liberty in restraining it: as is further evident, because he does restrain it when that good is not in view. If God *wills to permit* a thing that it may come to pass, then he wills that it should come to pass.*

* This phrase, "to will to permit," could never have obtained currency among either moral, theological, or metaphysical writers, had they duly considered the subject of *negative causality*—its peculiar nature, its relation to what is positive, and its appropriate consequences. By "causality" is meant, an *adequate reason* for a certain (as opposed to a mere probable) consequence; which causality, it is maintained, may be *negative* as well as positive, *passive* as well as active. A positive and active causation must be from the first cause, but not that which is negative and passive. That the latter is connected with consequences, which are

§ 11. God foresaw who would comply with the terms of salvation, and who would not : and he could have forbore to give being to such as he foresaw would not comply. Objectors

infallibly certain, will be shewn in the course of this note, which is intended to vindicate the divine character and government from undeserved imputations.

The word "permit," must either include an act of the will, or not include it : if the former, to will to permit must be "to will to will" something, or to will some act of the will. If it be said, that the phrase means, a will, in general, to exercise some *other will*, in particular ; it is replied, that this does not constitute any difference of will, except as one thing is subservient to another in the series of decrees. But a little consideration will shew the impropriety of applying the word in this manner. The divine decrees must necessarily be either direct, or indirect, as there is no medium ; and the former must be of those objects which are excellent for their own sake, but the latter must be made respecting objects for the sake of something else which is excellent. Nothing can be the object of a *direct* decree but what terminates in God, as well as emanates from him, in a direct manner, as goodness, holiness, truth, &c. and nothing can be an object of an *indirect* decree, (as the creation of a material world, the appointment of its laws, &c.) but what terminates in him in an indirect manner, as subservient to the other. For "of him, and through him, and to him, are all things" decreed by him. Thus far most are agreed.

But the word "permit," in reference to moral evil, cannot mean, in any consistency of language or thought, even an indirect decree or will ; for it would involve a decree of *opposite* objects, and thereby contradictory causations. God decrees the holiness of his creatures in order to their happiness, and their happiness for his own glory. But were we to say, that he decrees the creature's comparative defect, for the sake of his moral failure, and the latter for the sake of shewing his own justice, he must on that supposition decree *opposite* things, and thereby put the stamp of approbation upon the evil as well as upon the good. To say, that sin is *willed for the sake* of good, does not mend the matter ; for still, on the supposition, it would be *willed*, and consequently decreed, as a contrary object. That an inferior *good* should be willed in subserviency to another superior, is very just ; and that the laws of nature which are good should be the *occasion* of harm to individuals, is not unworthy of the holy author of those laws ; but moral evil stands *directly opposed* to his rectitude and infinitely holy nature.

According to the doctrine here controverted, God would be the fountain of good and evil alike ; and he who commits a sin may as justly ascribe it to God ultimately, as another may ascribe to him the goodness of his deeds. If the latter is called to exercise gratitude, the former is entitled to plead exculpation. Nor is it sufficient to say, that the sinner aims at an end, in transgressing, different from that which God aims at ; for, on the hypothesis, his circumstances, without one exception, are decreed, from whence the sin arises, and indeed the very existence of sin must ultimately proceed from the divine will. But that the sinner should be *blamed* for doing what was decreed to be done, including his *defects* (the ground of his fallibility) whence proceed his wrong ends in sinning, is to subvert all proper ideas of justice, right and wrong, good and evil.

Some will allow, that the difficulties which their hypothesis involves, are inexplicable, at least by our contracted minds in the present state ; but yet hold, that we are forced to determine thus, in order to avoid still greater difficulties. For, say they, we must either adopt this plan, or deny God's foreknowledge. But this is a hasty and illegitimate inference ; and which is owing, as before intimated, to the want of properly ascertaining the doctrine of negative causality. If this be overlooked, embarrassments will be sure to follow, nor can the most subtle penetration be of any avail to effect a disentanglement. This oversight is the

may say, God cannot always prevent men's sins, unless he acts contrary to the free nature of the subject, or without destroying men's liberty. But will they deny, that an omnipotent and

cause why many anxious enquirers after truth have met with a mortifying disappointment, in endeavouring to reconcile what otherwise is demonstrably irreconcilable. And this is the reason why many have drawn back with disgust from a scene, with which, the more they viewed it, the more they were perplexed. They neglected, or did not sufficiently perceive, the *only* principle by which the greatest difficulties in moral science may be satisfactorily explained, and by the aid of which some of the most important truths of revealed religion, which appeared to clash, may assume a beautiful consistency, and may be shewn to be founded in eternal truth. Faith indeed may live, and even triumph, without a scientific knowledge of its objects; but it may grow stronger, and triumph still more (*ceteris paribus*) in the front of daring opposition, or when insidiously attacked by the "opposition, of science, falsely so called," when possessed of demonstrative evidence of the harmony of divine perfections, and of truths which depend on that harmony. But, before we come to state and illustrate more particularly the principle in question, we must not lose sight of the other idea, included in the term "permit."

If the phrase "to will to permit" cannot mean "to will to will," or "to will to decree," an act of the will is *not* included in the term "permit." And this exclusion of an act of will, undoubtedly, enters into its only justifiable acceptance in reference to the present subject. To permit, is *not* to hinder what has, or appears to have, a tendency to take place. To will to hinder, to prevent, to oppose, to counteract, or to effect any thing, is strictly proper, when a contrary effect or tendency of any kind is implied. But to will to hinder a dead man from walking is nonsense. When a person has an inclination, or a tendency of any kind, and when it is in the power of another to hinder its operation, but *does not* hinder, it is proper to say that he *permits* it; that is, he *does not* will the contrary. An exercise of *will* is both useless and unmeaning, when only to *permit* is intended; for the event is supposed to take place *if not prevented*. For one man to *permit* another to do a good or a bad action, when it is in his power to prevent it, is good sense; because it implies an inclination in the person permitted. But why is it improper to say that *God permits* a man to do his duty? It is because he *neither* would, nor could do it by mere permission. If permission implied an act of will, there would be no impropriety in a language which yet all allow to be absurd; viz. that God *permits* a man to be good! But to *permit evil* is good sense, and approved language. Why? Because no exercise of will, on the part of the permitter, is required; or, because it is implied that it would take place if not prevented. To *decree* the continued existence of the world in its present form for a given time, expresses a clear and consistent idea; but to say that God has decreed that he *will not* do the *contrary* during the same period, is unmeaning language. When a declaration is made, that God *will not* do a thing, as drowning the earth with another deluge, &c. the plain meaning is, that it expresses the *non-existence* of an *imagined* event. But the non-existence of an imagined event, no more implies a decree concerning it, than does the non-existence of other imagined worlds, or another fancied first cause. To *prevent* implies *will*, in counteracting the intended effect, but to *permit*, is *not* to will the counteraction. Therefore, "to will to permit" is the same thing as "to will *not* to will," which, both in meaning and in language, is alike indefensible. And when we say, that God permits moral evil, if we have any consistent meaning, it must intend, that he *does not* will to hinder it—except in a *legislative* sense—and if so, what possible room is there left for any exercise of *will* in permission? Infinite perfection forbids it. Man, indeed, may *determine not* to do a thing; but this must refer either to a *former intention* of doing that thing, which now is altered, or to some *expecta-*

infinitely wise God could not possibly have influenced all mankind to continue in their obedience, as the elect angels have done, without destroying their liberty? God will order it so,

tion of the contrary. But nothing of this kind can belong to God, who "is of one mind."

Can any sin then take place without God's will and concurrence? It is replied; if by "sin" be meant the act of the sinner in its concrete form, the divine will and concurrence are implied. But we should remember that in every act, however morally evil, there is, and necessarily must be, a *natural good* included. The natural powers and energy of the mind are of that quality, proceeding from the divine will, and without which there could be no moral act either good or bad. But the *sinfulness* of the act (which is often expressed by the shorter word *sin*) cannot possibly proceed except from some *defect*, which therefore must be a *negative* cause, and which no more needs the divine will for its production, than does mere nihility need it. The idea of perfection and of will, is positive; but that of imperfection and of permission is negative. And as perfection admits of degrees, considered as existing in creatures, so does the want of perfection. The former is the effect of divine will, but the latter needs no will, nor can admit any. Nay for a creature to exist without *any want* of perfection, is the same as a self-sufficient creature (for then alone could he be without imperfection) which is infinitely absurd.

We may further observe, that if there were nothing good in an act concretely sinful, no evil could attach to such act; for what is moral evil, if not the perversion of that which is naturally good? If the natural powers and their acts, abstractedly considered, were not in themselves good, moral evil would be impossible. And were there no *negative* cause, or some kind of *defect* in the agent, all his acts would be *morally* as well as physically good, and that infallibly, as those of the absolutely perfect Being. In the Deity there is no defect of any kind, nor any negative cause of any effects or consequences; and therefore no *liability* to moral evil.

But how can we *conceive* of a negative cause, affording a demonstration of an infallible consequence? Is there any thing *analogous* to it in the nature of things? And if there be, what *importance* can be attached to it? Let us coolly endeavour to furnish a reply to these questions. We can easily conceive of a *mathematical point*, and it is universally allowed that it has *no dimensions*—it has neither length, breadth, nor thickness—and therefore is a negative idea. It implies a *negation* of every thing that has positive existence. It is therefore pure *nihility* under a *relative* consideration. But though in *itself* it is nothing positive, yet that *nothing*, when it stands *related* to a line which has positive length, becomes a source of innumerable demonstrations. For, if we take into the account, together with a point, a circumference and equal radii, we have the positive idea of a circle, composed of a centre and circumference. And without this relation subsisting between a relative nothing and a positive something, the idea of a circle is not possible; and consequently the ideas of the *properties* of a circle (which are innumerable) are absolute *impossibilities*. So nearly allied and so perfectly similar, are the very first principles of geometrical and metaphysical science. For, as without the negative idea of a mathematical point, (for points are the boundaries of lines) constituting an adequate reason of an infallible consequence, not a single demonstration in geometry can be effected; so, without the negative idea of passive power, as the opposite to that power which is active and positive, not one demonstration, properly so called, can be effected in metaphysical and moral science. This may appear to some a bold assertion; but it is not more bold than true. He who would dispute the fact, may just as well dispute the truth of the very first definition in geometrical science, viz. that of a point. He may indeed raise objections, and plead that we can *see* a point, and therefore it must have *some dimensions*; or, if it be *nothing*, it can be no cause, no adequate reason of any thing as a consequence,

that the saints and angels in heaven never will sin : and does it therefore follow, that their liberty is destroyed, and that they are not free, but forced in their actions ? does it follow, that

&c. But if he attempt seriously to vindicate his objections by argument, he cannot avoid shewing himself perfectly ridiculous to those who understand the subject. And equally ridiculous must he appear who would attempt to disprove the fact of negative causation in moral science.

But how can we admit that there may be two coexistent causes in the same subject, one positive and the other negative ? We are obliged to admit it from a due consideration of stubborn facts. For what fact can be more plain, than that from the same agent may, and actually do proceed, effects, virtue and vice, which are diametrically opposite to each other ? And surely such effects must proceed from opposite causes. If therefore virtue proceeds from a positive cause, as all must allow, vice must proceed from a negative causality. This evidence is demonstrative. Yet, the inquisitive may ask, is there any phenomenon in the nature of things analagous to this ? Though an answer to this question is not necessary to the end of establishing the fact, it may serve, *ex abundantia*, for illustration. For this purpose, then, we may appeal to a mathematical *line*, which has positive length, with a *negation* of breadth ; and without this negative causality no geometrical demonstration can be established. And the same may be said of a plane *superficies*, the boundaries of which are lines. Thus a negative causality enters into every geometrical demonstration, in conjunction with what is positive. But the reader should keep in mind that these instances are adduced for *illustration*, not professed *proofs* of the doctrine. The latter is founded on direct evidence from the very nature of God and that of a creature.

That a comparative defect is a *negative cause*, in the sense before explained, is evident, when we consider (as before intimated) that in no creature can it be found without a comparative good, conjoined with it ; and that in free agents this good, which consists chiefly in the natural intellect and will, is capable of opposite directions, one conformable to rectitude, and another opposed to it. Now, it is clearly impossible that these directions, one *for* the chief good, and the other *against* it, should proceed from the *same* cause, whether good or bad. The direction of the will *towards* rectitude cannot be caused by *defect*, any more than something positive can proceed from nihility. Nor can the direction of the will *against* rectitude be caused by *perfection* of any kind or degree. But intellect and will in all beings, whether original or derived, are perfections, and therefore cannot be the cause of a direction against perfection ; for then there would be a cause repugnant to itself, which is impossible. The wrong choice, therefore, which is a wrong direction of the will, must proceed from a *negative cause* ; for in causes there is no medium between positive and negative.

But though infinite perfection cannot be the cause of imperfection of any kind or degree, for reasons which have been already adduced, yet perfection affords *occasion*, an innocent occasion, for imperfection to shew itself, by way of contrast. Thus, if absolute perfection were to produce no creature, no *occasion* would be afforded for comparative imperfection to shew itself ; and without the latter, moral evil would be impossible. The inference, therefore, is irrefragable, that moral evil originates from a *negative causality*, or that *defect* in the agent, which is the want of ulterior perfection. Yet here it may be proper to add, as of the utmost importance to be taken into the account, that though effects may proceed from negative causes, as well as from positive, and with *equal* certainty, yet there is this important difference ; the former is only *hypothetical*, the latter *absolute*, originally considered. The first cause is positive existence independent of will, and unconditional, and every other positive cause must emanate from the first will : but a negative cause, consisting in defect, cannot possibly take place, with respect to causality, but on

they are turned into blocks, as the Arminians say the Calvin is ts' doctrines turn men? God decrees all the good that ever comes to pass; and therefore there certainly will come to pass

conditions, viz. the condition of a created nature, and that of permission, in the explained sense of the word. A positive cause may counteract the tendency of a negative one, but not *vice versa*.

Hence is derived the proper notion of *permitting* moral evil to take place; the negative cause is *not hindered* from taking effect, for reasons infinitely good and wise. But to represent this permission, or sufferance, as willing or decreeing the negative as well as the positive part of sin, is an infinite absurdity; for the sinfulness of an act being the direct opposite to infinite perfection, such representation makes infinite perfection to oppose itself. Thus all good, in every kind and degree—every quantum of created nature, from the greatest to the least, together with all positive and active causality—are from God. "He is light," knowledge and purity, "and with him is no darkness at all," no ignorance, no want of holiness. And thus also all moral evil proceeds from the offender, who is the subject at once of a quantum of derived, and therefore limited perfection, and of comparative defect. And these two things (perfection and defect) enter into the very notion of a created nature.

Is it necessary to say any thing more in confirmation of the general theorem, that there is in the human mind a negative causality, from whence may flow a certainty of consequence? It may tend to the further satisfaction of the reader, if we advert to another argument founded on the nature of *free will*. The term "will" designates a power of the mind which is positive and active; but the term "free," connected with it, expresses a *negative* idea. For it expresses, when properly used, the *absence* of coercion and restraint, but in different respects. The complex idea of "free will" is resolved into this plain proposition, *the will is free*; that is, the will is *not constrained* in one respect, and is *not restrained* in another. It is neither decretively constrained to evil, nor decretively restrained from good. No other *freedom* can be predicated of the will as the cause of moral effects. And it is as much a relative nothing as a mathematical point. We may therefore safely affirm, that among the countless millions of moral effects, which take place, not only among men but also in the created universe of free agents, there is not one but what is beholden to a *negative causality* for its existence, in connection with what is positive. For, if *freedom* be excluded, no act can have a *moral* quality.

To conclude this note, which has already exceeded the limits at first intended, we must observe once more, and it cannot be too strongly inculcated, that *there is no case or circumstance in which moral evil might not be prevented* by the supreme will, were it employed for that purpose. For as God is all-sufficient, and as his control over his creatures, for their good, is absolute; his *power* to effect a prevention of moral evil is undoubted. Nor can there be any question that this power, in pursuance of divine decrees, does in fact, and in instances which to us are inconceivably numerous, counteract the tendencies of negative causes to prevent moral evil. But if it be enquired, *why in any instances it is permitted to take place*, when God might with infinite ease prevent it? It is sufficient here to say, that God is infinitely *wise*, as well as powerful, and *equitable* as well as benevolent. But a further answer to this enquiry would lead us to consider the ultimate reasons of moral government, or why a moral system is at all established; and the question has been already discussed in the first volume of this work, to which the reader is referred.

COROLLARIES.

1. Negative causality, in connection with what is positive, is an essential principle of moral science. If either be excluded, we can have no clear and adequate idea of any moral act, much less a demonstration of its cause.

no more good, than he has absolutely decreed to cause; and there certainly and infallibly will no more believe, no more be godly, and no more be saved, than God has decreed that he will cause to believe, and cause to be godly, and will save.

2. These two principles, relatively connected, furnish us with sufficient *data*, and the only sufficient ones, for a demonstrative solution of this problem, *What is the origin of moral evil?*

3. In these principles we have the means of demonstrating the origin of *all evil* whatever, as well as of all good.

4. We may further infer, that Mr. LOCKE was not mistaken when he said, "I am bold to think, that *morality is capable of demonstration*, as well as Mathematics." Essay, B. III. chap. xi. § 16. and again, "The idea of a Supreme Being, infinite in power, goodness, and wisdom, whose workmanship we are, and on whom we depend; and the idea of ourselves, as understanding rational beings, being such as are clear in us, would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued, afford such foundations—as might place *morality amongst the sciences capable of demonstration*: wherein I doubt not but from self-evident propositions, by necessary consequences, as incontestible as those in Mathematics, the measures of right and wrong might be made out to any one that will apply himself with the same indifferency and attention to the one, as he does to the other of these sciences." B. iv. chap. iii. § 18. Once more, "This gave me the confidence to advance that conjecture, which I suggested chap. 3. viz. That *morality is capable of demonstration*, as well as Mathematics. And I doubt not but if a right method were taken, a great part of morality might be made out with that clearness, that could leave, to a considering man, no more reason to doubt, than he could have to doubt of the truth of propositions in mathematics which have been demonstrated to him." B. iv. chap. xii. § 8.

5. As geometrical evidence proceeds upon the *supposition* of points, lines, angles, &c. and the province of the demonstration is to shew the *consequence* resulting from the supposition; so, the above stated principles afford the means of demonstrating moral consequences, on the *supposition* of effects being *given* to shew their necessary causes, or of causes being *given* to shew their necessary effects. If the quantum of moral good, or of moral evil, in any given act, be *supposed*, the business of a demonstration is to shew the relative proportion it bears to its appropriate cause or causes: Or, on the other hand, if the quantum of causal influence be *supposed*, to shew, as a demonstrative consequence, the nature and relative proportion of moral good or evil in the act. This is the true province of moral science, as contradistinguished from conjectural observations and a set of rules. These, in their proper place, have an important use for the purpose of moral conduct; but they can by no means furnish *data* for scientific knowledge.

6. There is one inference more that must not be omitted, viz. that the true principles and demonstrative consequences of moral science are incomparably more important in themselves, and ought to be more interesting to all mankind, than any others; because they lead us in a more direct manner than any others to the knowledge of God and ourselves. They point out to us at once the sources of good and evil, happiness and misery; they afford *motives* for devout affections of the noblest kind; and, in proportion as they are properly applied, they stimulate to the practice of the sublimest virtues, and the most circumspect conduct. Without a divine revelation, indeed, it is highly probable, that the true principles and relations of moral science could never have been discovered by mankind; but that circumstance, while it has no tendency to depreciate the evidence, demands our gratitude to him who is the only source of "every good, and every perfect gift."—W.

If God, from all eternity, knew that such and such things were future, then they were future; and consequently the proposition was from all eternity true, that such a thing, at such a time, would be. And it is as much impossible that a thing should be future, without some reason of its being future, as that it should actually be, without some reason why it is. It is as perfectly unreasonable to suppose, that this proposition should be true, viz. such a thing will be, or is to be, without a reason why it is true; as it is that this proposition should be true, such a thing actually is, or has been, without some reason why that is true, or why that thing exists. My meaning is, that it does not remain a question; but the matter is decided, whether the proposition shall be true or not.—The thing, in its own nature, is not necessary, but only possible; and therefore, it is not of itself that it is future; it is not of itself in a state of futurity, if I may so speak, but only in a state of possibility; and there must be some cause to bring it out of a state of mere possibility, into a state of futurity. It cannot be chance or mere accident: that is contrary to every rational supposition. For it is to be supposed, that there is some reason for it, and that something does decide it. If there be any thing that comes to pass by mere accident, that comes to pass of itself without any reason.

§ 13. The first objection of the Arminians is, that the divine decree infringes on the creature's liberty. In answer to this objection, we may observe some things to shew what is the true notion of liberty, and the absurdity of their notion of liberty. Their notion is, that there is a sovereignty in the will, and that the will determines itself, so that its determination to choose or refuse this or that is primarily within itself; which description of liberty implies a self-contradiction. For it supposes the will, in its first act, choosing or refusing to be determined by itself; which implies that there is an antecedent act of the will to that first act, determining that act.—For, if the will determines its own first act, then there must be an act of the will before that first act, (for that determining is acting), which is a contradiction. There can be no fallacy in this; for we know that if the will determines its own act, it does not determine it without acting. Therefore, here is this contradiction, viz. that there is an act of the will before the first act. There is an act of the will determining what it shall choose, before the first act of choice; which is as much

as to say, that there is an act of volition before the first act of volition. For the will's determining what it will choose, is choosing, is willing. Therefore I inquire what determines that first act of the will, viz. its determination of its own act? it must be answered, according to their scheme, that it is the will by a foregoing act. Here, again, we have the same contradiction, viz. that the first act of the will is determined by an act that is before that first act. If the will determines itself, or determines its own choice, the meaning of it must be, if there be any meaning belonging to it, that the will determines how it will choose; and that it chooses according to that determination how to choose, or is directed in choosing by its own determination. But then I would inquire, whether that first determination, that directs the choice, be not itself an act or a volition; and if so, I would inquire what determines that act? Is it another determination still prior to that in the order of nature? then I would inquire, what determines the first act or determination of all? If the will, in its acts of willing or choosing, determines or directs itself how to choose, then there is something done by the will prior to its act of choosing that is determined, viz. its determining or directing itself how to choose. This act determining or directing, must be something besides or distinct from the choice determined or directed, and must be prior in order of nature to it. Here are two acts of the will, one the cause of the other, viz. the act of the will directing and determining, and the act or choice directed or determined. Now, I inquire, what determines that first act of the will determining or directing, to determine and direct as it does? If it be said, the will determines itself in that; then that supposes there is another act of the will prior to that, directing and determining that act, which is contrary to the supposition. And if it was not, still the question would recur, what determines that first determining act of the will?

§ 14. If the will determines itself, one of these three things must be meant, viz. 1. That the very same act of the will determines itself. But this is as absurd as to say that something makes itself; and it supposes it to be before it is. For the act of determining is as much prior to the thing determined, as the act making is before the thing made. Or, 2. The meaning must be, that the will determines its own act, by some other act that is prior to it in order of nature; which implies that the will acts before its first act. Or, 3. The mean-

ing must be, that the faculty, considered at the same time as perfectly without act, determines its own consequent act; which is to talk without a meaning, and is a great absurdity. To suppose that the faculty remaining at the same time perfectly without act, can determine any thing, is a plain contradiction; for determining is acting. And besides, if the will does determine itself, that power of determining itself does not argue any freedom, unless it be by an act of the will, or unless that determination be itself an act of choice. For what freedom or liberty is there in the will's determining itself; without an act of choice in determining, whereby it may choose which way it will determine itself? So that those that suppose the will has a power of self-determination, must suppose that the very determination is an act of the will, or an act of choice, or else it does not at all help them out in what they would, viz. the liberty of the will. But if that very determination how to act, be itself an act of choice, then the question returns, what determines this act of choice?

§ 15. Also, the foreknowledge of God contradicts their notion of liberty. For if from all eternity God foreknew that such a thing would be, then the event was infallibly certain beforehand, and that proposition was true from all eternity, that such a thing would be; and therefore there was an indissoluble connexion beforehand between the subject and predicate of that proposition. If the proposition was true beforehand, the subject and predicate of it were connected beforehand. And therefore it follows from hence, that it is utterly impossible that it should not prove true, and that, for this reason, that it is utterly impossible that a thing should be true, and not true, at the same time.

§ 16. The same kind of infallible certainty, that the thing will come to pass, or impossibility but that it should come to pass, that they object against, must necessarily be inferred another way, whether we hold the thing to be any way decreed or not. For it has been shown before, and I suppose none will deny, that God from all eternity decrees his own actions. Therefore he from all eternity decrees every punishment that he ever has inflicted, or will inflict. So that it is impossible, by their own reasoning, but that the punishment should come to pass. And if it be impossible but that the punishment should come to pass, then it is equally impossible but that the sin should come to pass. For if it be possible that

the sin should not come to pass, and yet impossible but that the punishment should come to pass, then it is impossible but that God should punish that sin which may never be.

§ 17. For God certainly to know that a thing will be, that possibly may be, and possibly may not be, implies a contradiction. If possibly it may be otherwise, then how can God know certainly that it will be? If it possibly may be otherwise, then he knows it possibly may be otherwise; and that it is inconsistent with his certainly knowing that it will not be otherwise. If God certainly knows it will be, and yet it may possibly be otherwise, then it may possibly happen to be otherwise than God certainly knows it will be. If so, then it may possibly happen that God may be mistaken in his judgment, when he certainly knows: for it is supposed, that it is possible that it should be otherwise than he judges. For that it should be otherwise than he judges, and that he should be mistaken, are the same thing. How unfair therefore is it in those that hold the foreknowledge of God, to insist upon this objection from human liberty, against the decrees, when their scheme is attended with the same difficulty, exactly in the same manner!

§ 18. Their other objection is, that God's decrees make God the author of sin. I answer, that there is no more necessity of supposing God the author of sin, on this scheme, than on the other. For if we suppose, according to my doctrine, that God has determined, from all eternity, the number and persons of those that shall perform the condition of the covenant of grace; in order to support this doctrine, there is no need of maintaining any more concerning God's decreeing sin, than this; viz. that God has decreed that he will *permit* all the sin that ever comes to pass, and that upon his permitting it, it will certainly come to pass. And they hold the same thing. For they hold, that God does determine beforehand to permit all the sin that does come to pass; and that he certainly knows, that if he does permit it, it will come to pass. I say, they in their scheme allow both these; they allow that God does permit all the sin to come to pass, that ever does come to pass: and those that allow the foreknowledge of God, do also allow the other thing, viz. that he knows, concerning all the sin that ever does really come to pass, that it will come to pass upon his permitting it. So that, if this be making

God the author of sin, they make him so in the very same way that they charge us with doing it. They own that God does permit sin, and that he knows, with respect to all sin that ever is committed, that upon his permitting it, it will come to pass; and we hold no other. God's permission of sin they allow; and yet it would be a sin in men to permit sin. We ought not to permit, or suffer it, where we have opportunity to hinder it; and we cannot permit it, without making ourselves in some measure guilty. Yet they allow, that God permitting it does not make him guilty of it.

§ 19. They say, that we ought to begin in religion, with the perfections of God, and make these a rule to interpret scripture. *Ans.* 1. If this be the best rule, I ask, why is it not as good a rule to argue from these perfections of God, his omniscience, infinite happiness, infinite wisdom and power, as his other attributes that they argue from? If it be not as good a rule to argue from these as those, it must be because they are not so certain; or because it is not so certain that he is possessed of these perfections. But this they will not maintain: for his moral perfections are proved no otherwise, than by arguing from his natural perfections; and therefore, the latter must be equally certain with the former. Again, *2dly*, They lay it down for a rule, to embrace no doctrine which they, by their own reason, cannot reconcile with the moral perfections of God. But I would shew the unreasonableness of this rule. For, If this be a good rule, then it always was so. Let us then see what will follow. We shall then, have reason to conclude every thing to be really inconsistent with God's moral perfections, that we cannot reconcile with his moral perfections; for if we have not reason to conclude that it is inconsistent, then we have no reason to conclude that it is not true. But if this be true, that we have reason to conclude every thing is inconsistent with God's moral perfections, which we cannot reconcile with those perfections, then David had reason to conclude, that some things that he saw take place, in fact, were inconsistent with God's moral perfections; for he could not reconcile them with those perfections, *Psa.* lxxiii. And Job had cause to come to the same conclusion concerning some events in his day. If it be a good rule, that we must conclude that to be inconsistent with the divine perfections, that we cannot reconcile with, or, which is the same thing, that we cannot see how it is inconsistent with, those perfections, then it must be, because we have reason to con-

clude that it cannot happen that our reason cannot see how it can be; and then it will follow, that we must reject the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, &c.

The scripture itself supposes, that there are some things in the scripture that men may not be able to reconcile with God's moral perfections. See Rom. ix. 19. "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" And the apostle does not answer the objection, by shewing us how to reconcile it with the moral perfections of God, but by representing the arrogance of quarrelling with revealed doctrines under such a pretence, and not considering the infinite distance between God and us. "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" And God answered Job after the same manner. God rebuked him for darkening counsel by words without knowledge, and answered him only, by declaring and manifesting to him the infinite distance between God and him; so letting him know, that it became him humbly to submit to God, and acknowledge his justice, even in those things that were difficult to his reason; and that without solving his difficulties any other way, than by making him sensible of the weakness of his own understanding.

§ 20. If there be no election, then it is not God that makes men to differ, expressly contrary to scripture. Some of the ill consequences of the Arminian doctrine are, that it robs God of the greater part of the glory of his grace, and takes away a principal motive to love and praise him, and exalts man to God's room, and ascribes that glory to self, which belongs to God alone.

§ 21. That election is not from a foresight of works, as depending on the condition of man's will, is evident by 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Philip. ii. 13. "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." Rom. ix. 15, 16. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."—So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Men's labours and endeavours themselves are from God. 1 Cor. xv. 10. "But by the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace which was

bestowed upon me, was not in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all. Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

§ 22. They say, as God's power extends only to all things possible, so God's knowledge only extends to all things knowable. *Ans.* Things impossible, or contradictions, are not things; but events that come to pass, are things. God's power does extend to all things, otherwise it would not be infinite.— So neither is the knowledge of God infinite, unless God knows all things. To suppose that God cannot do things impossible, does not suppose that God's power can be increased. But to suppose that God does not know men's free actions, does suppose that God's knowledge may be increased.

§ 23. If God absolutely determined that Christ's death should have success in gathering a church to him, it will follow, that there was a number absolutely elected, or that God had determined some should surely be saved. If God determined that some should surely be saved, that implies that he had determined that some should perform the conditions of salvation, and be saved; or, which is the same thing, that he would cause that they should be surely saved. But this cannot be, without fixing on the persons beforehand. For the cause is before the effect. There is no such thing as God's resolving absolutely beforehand that he would save some, and yet not determining who they should be, before they were actually saved: or that there should be in a number the requisites of salvation, and yet not determine who, till they actually have the requisites of salvation. But God had absolutely determined that some should be saved, yea a great number, after Christ's death; and had determined it beforehand. Because he had absolutely promised it; Isa. xlix. 6. and liii. 10. See in Psa. lxxii. and other places in the Psalms, and Tit. ii. 14. God having absolutely purposed this before Christ's death, must either have then determined the persons, or resolved that he would hereafter determine the persons; at least, if he saw there was need of it, and saw that they did not come in of themselves. But this latter supposition, if we allow it, overthrows the Arminian scheme. It shows, that such a predetermination, or absolute election, is not inconsistent with God's perfections, or the nature of the gospel constitution, or God's government of the world, and his promise of reward to the believing and obedient, and the design of gospel offers and

commands, as the Arminians suppose. If God has absolutely determined to save some certain persons, then, doubtless, he has in like manner determined concerning all that are to be saved. God's promising, supposes not only that the thing is future, but that God will do it. If it be left to chance, or man's contingent will, and the event happen right, God is never the truer. He performs not his promise; he takes no effectual care about it; it is not he who promised, that performs. That thing, or, rather *no*-thing, called fortune, orders all.—Concerning the absurdity of supposing that it was not absolutely determined beforehand, what success there should be of Christ's death; see *Polhill's Spec. Theolog. in Christo*, p. 165—171.

§ 24. It is pretended, that the antecedent certainty of any sin being committed, seeing that it is attended with necessity, takes away all liberty, and makes warnings and exhortations to avoid sin, a mere illusion. To this I would bring the instance of Peter. Christ told him, that he should surely deny him thrice that night, before the cock should crow twice. And yet, after that, Christ exhorted all his disciples to watch and pray, that they might not fall into temptation.—“God's decree does not at all take off the use of our endeavours. For in the use of means, the very decree itself is to receive its accomplishment. Let me refer you to a scripture story for the illustration and proof of this. When the apostle Paul was in imminent danger of shipwreck, in his voyage to Rome, he encouraged the company, by assuring them, there should not be the loss of any man's life, but only of the vessel. For, says he, “there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.” Acts xxvii. 23, 24. Yet when the shipmen were by and by going to flee out of the ship, to save themselves by the boat, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved: which did not at all weaken the assurance he had just before given them from God, that they should all be saved; for God, who had appointed the end, that they should be saved, had also appointed the means, that they should be saved by the help of these shipmen. So, though God has ordained the salvation of those that shall be saved, he has ordained it in the way of faith and holiness, and a working

out their own salvation with fear and trembling. COOPER *on Predestination unto Life*, p. 58, 59.

§ 25. "It follows from the infinite perfection of God, that he equally determines within himself all his own works at once. God cannot but be capable of this by his knowledge of all possibilities, and wisdom to judge, at one view, which of them were fittest to be carried into existence through boundless ages. And is it not the wisdom of every agent, before he sets about a work of any compass, to fix in his design, as far as he can, all things that any way relate to it? Now, all God's works, from the beginning of the creation to the consummation of all things, are one whole and entire grand scheme, whose ultimate end lies at a vast distance from the beginning, and all the intermediate operations, as so many parts, conspire to it in a regular connexion. How then can it be consistent with his most perfect wisdom, to leave any of them to an after thought, when he had forethought sufficient to provide for all alike. And since he would not knowingly suffer any thing utterly inconsistent with his own glory, as he had power to hinder it, he has no doubt fixed such bounds and limitations to all his creatures, that nothing shall be produced by any of them, which may not have a proper place and use in the sum of events. He has settled also particular subordinate ends to individual events, and a general good end on the whole, which they shall all together subserve. "Of him," we are told, "and through him, and to him, are all things." Rom. xi. 36. "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations." Psalm xxxiii. 11. Nothing can ever arise to surprize him, or cast any difficulty or perplexity in his way, he having already from eternity settled the proper measures of conduct in every case that shall emerge. How incomprehensible and wonderful in counsel, as well as excellent in working is God! and what reason have we to cry out, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 33. HUBBARD. *Faith and pract.* Sermon 6.

§ 26. As to the decrees of election, see Psalm lxxv. 4. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." Isaiah xli. 9. "Thou whom I have taken from the

ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant ; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." Math. xx. 16. " So the last shall be first, and the first last : for many be called, but few chosen." Chap. xxii. 14. " For many are called, but few are chosen." Chap. xxiv. 24. " For there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very *elect*." John vi. 37—46. " All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out," &c. Chap. x. 3, 4, and verse 11. and 14—17. v. 26—30. " To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice ; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. I am the good Shepherd ; and know my sheep, and am known of mine. Therefore doth my Father love me ; because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. But ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep, as I said unto you," &c. Chap. xvii. 6—20. " I have manifested thy name unto the men thou gavest me out of the world : thine they were, and thou gavest them me ; and they have kept thy word, &c. Neither pray I for these alone ; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Acts xviii. 10 " For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee : for I have much people in this city." " All things are delivered unto me of my Father ; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." John vi. 44—46. " No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day, &c." Chap. xvii. 9—13. " I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine," &c. 1 Thes. v. 9. " For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." " What shall we say then ? Is there unrighteousness with God ? God forbid. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, &c. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault ? for who hath resisted his will ? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour ? &c. Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand

of the sea, a remnant shall be saved : And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. As it is written, " Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone, and a rock of offence : and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Rom. ix. " I say then, Hath God cast away his people ? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, &c. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works : otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace : otherwise, work is no more work. What then ? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for ; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. xi.

§ 27. Concerning the Arminian notion, that when the apostles speak of election, they only mean that by which the professing Christians in those days were distinguished from others, as the nation of Israel of old was ; this is unreasonable, according to their own principles. For if they were elected, and that was the reason why they so far embraced the gospel, as to become Christians rather than others, then, on Arminian principles, no thanks were due to them for embracing the gospel. Besides, their principles render vain all endeavours to spread the gospel. For the gospel will certainly be spread to all nations that are elected ; and all such shall have the offers of the gospel, whether they take any care of the matter or no. Dr. Whitby, to make out his scheme, makes the word election signify two entirely different things ; one, election to a common faith of Christianity ; another, a conditional election to salvation. But every one must be sensible of the unreasonableness of such shifting and varying, and turning into all shapes, to evade the force of scripture. It is evident the apostle, in Rom. ix. has not only respect to God's sovereignty in the election and preterition of nations ; because he illustrates his meaning by the instance of a particular person, viz. Pharaoh. The exercise of the sovereignty that he speaks of, appears by the express words of the apostle about vessels of mercy, and vessels of wrath ; vessels of honour, and vessels of dishonour. But the vessels of mercy, he speaks of as prepared to glory. They, it is plain, are those that shall be saved ; and the vessels of wrath are those that perish. He speaks of those

that shall be saved, v. 27. "A remnant shall be saved." What is there that God doth decree, according to the scheme of the Arminians, so as to make it in any measure consistent with itself? He does not decree any of the great events of the world of mankind, (which are the principal events, and those to which all others are subordinated) because these depend on men's free will. And if God does not decree and order those events beforehand, then what becomes of the providence of God? and what room is there for prayer, if there be no providence? Prayer is shut out this way also. According to them, we cannot reasonably pray for the accomplishment of things that are already fixed, before our prayers: for then our prayers alter nothing, and what, say they, signifies it for us to pray?

§ 28. To Dr. Whitby's observation, that the apostle speaks of churches, as though they were all elect; I answer He speaks from a judgment of charity, as Dr. Whitby himself observes, p. 460. God foreknows the elect, as God is said to know those that are his own sheep from strangers; as Christ is said not to know the workers of iniquity, that is, he owns them not. In the same sense, God is said to know the elect from all eternity; that is, he knew them as a man knows his own things. He acknowledged them from eternity. He owns them as his children. If God ever determined, in the general, that some of mankind should certainly be saved, and did not leave it altogether undetermined whether ever so much as one soul of all mankind should believe in Christ; it must be, that he determined that some particular persons should certainly believe in him. For it is certain, that if he has left it undetermined concerning this and that, and the other person, whether ever he should believe or not, and so of every particular person in the world; then there is no necessity at all, that this or that, or any particular person in the world, should ever be saved by Christ, for matter of any determination of God's. So that, though God sent his Son into the world, yet the matter was left altogether undetermined by God, whether ever any person should be saved by him; and there was all this ado about Christ's birth, death, resurrection, ascension, and sitting at God's right hand, when it was not as yet determined whether he should ever save one soul, or have any mediatorial kingdom at all.

§ 29. It is most absurd, to call such a conditional election as they talk of, by the name of election, seeing there is a necessary connection between faith in Jesus Christ and eternal life. Those that believe in Christ must be saved, according to God's inviolable constitution of things. What nonsense is it, therefore, to talk of choosing such to life from all eternity out of the rest of mankind? A predestination of such to life, is altogether useless and needless. By faith in one that has satisfied for sin, the soul necessarily becomes free from sin. By faith in one that has bought eternal life for them, they have, of unavoidable consequence, a right to eternal life. Now, what sense is it to say, that God from all eternity, of his free grace, chose out those that he foresaw would have no guilt of sin, that they should not be punished for their guilt, as others were, when it is a contradiction to suppose that they can be punished for their guilt, when they have none? for who can lay any thing to their charge, when it is Christ that has died? And what do they mean by an election of men to that which is, in its own nature, impossible that it should not be, whether they are elected to it or no: or by God's choosing them that had a right to eternal life, that they should possess it? What sense is it to say, that a creditor chooses out those among his debtors to be free from debt, that owe him nothing? But if they say that election is only God's determination, in the general, that all that believe shall be saved; in what sense can this be called election? They are not *persons* that are here chosen, but mankind is divided into two sorts, the one believing, and the other unbelieving; and God chooses the believing sort: it is not election of persons, but of qualifications. God (say they) does from all eternity, choose to bestow eternal life upon those that have a right to it, rather than upon those who have a right to damnation. Is this all the election we have an account of in God's word?—Such a thing as election may well be allowed; for that there is such a thing as sovereign love, is certain; that is, love, not for any excellency, but merely God's good pleasure. For whether it is proper to say, that God from all eternity loved the elect or no, it is proper to say, that God loved men after the fall, while sinners and enemies: for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to die. This was not for any goodness or excellency, but merely God's good pleasure. For he would not love the fallen angels.

§ 30. Christ is often spoken of in scripture as being, by way of eminency, the Elect or chosen of God. Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth." Luke xxiii. 35. "If he be the Christ, the chosen of God." 1 Pet. ii. 4. "A living stone, chosen of God, and precious." Ps. lxxxix. 3. "I have made a covenant with my Chosen: v. 19. "I have exalted one chosen out of the people." Hence those persons in the Old Testament, that were the most remarkable types of Christ, were the subjects of a very remarkable election of God, by which they were designed to some peculiar honour of the prophetic, priestly, or kingly office. So Moses was called God's chosen in that wherein he was eminently a type of Christ, viz, as a prophet and ruler, and mediator for his people; Ps. cvi. 23. "Had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach." So Aaron was constituted high-priest by a remarkable election of God, as in Numb. xvi. 5. and xvii. 5. Deut. xxi. 5. And David the king was the subject of a remarkable election; Ps. lxxviii. 67—72. "Moreover, he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion, which he loved, &c. He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds, from following the ewes great with young; he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance." 1 Sam. xvi. 7—10. "The Lord hath not chosen this, neither hath the Lord chosen this; the Lord hath not chosen these." Christ is the chosen of God, both as to his divine and human nature. As to his divine nature, he was chosen of God, though not to any addition to his essential glory or real happiness, which is infinite; yet to great declarative glory. As he is man, he is chosen of God to the highest degree of real glory and happiness of all creatures. As to both, he is chosen of God to the office and glory of the mediator between God and men, and the head of all the elect creation. His election as it respects his divine nature, was for his worthiness and excellency and infinite amiableness in the sight of God, and perfect fitness for that which God chose him to; and his worthiness was the ground of his election. But his election, as it respects his human nature, was free and sovereign, not being for any worthiness; but his election was the foundation of his worthiness. God had determined to exalt one of the creatures so high, that he should be one person with God, and should have communion with God, and should have glory in all respects answerable;

and so should be the head of all other elect creatures, that they might be united to God, and glorified in him. And his sovereignty appears in the election of the man Jesus, various ways. It appears in choosing the species of creatures of which he should be, viz. the race of mankind, and not the angels, the superior species. God's sovereignty also appears in choosing this creature of the seed of fallen creatures, that were become enemies and rebels, abominable, miserable creatures. It appears, in choosing that he should be of such a branch of mankind, in selecting the posterity of David, a mean person originally, and the youngest of the family. And as he was the seed of the woman, so his sovereignty appears in his being the seed of such particular woman; as of Leah, the uncomely wife of Jacob, whom her husband had not chosen, &c. And his sovereignty appears in the choice of that individual female, of whom Christ was born.

§ 31. It was owing to this election of God, that the man Jesus was not one of the corrupt race of mankind; so that his freedom from sin is owing to the free, sovereign, electing love of God in him, as well as in the rest of elect men. All holiness, all obedience and good works, and perseverance in him, was owing to the electing love of God, as well as in his elect members. For if he had failed; if his courage, resolution and love had been conquered by his sufferings, he never could have been delivered from them; for then he would have failed in his obedience to God; and his love to God failing, and being overcome by sufferings, these sufferings would have failed of the nature of an acceptable sacrifice to God; and the infinite value of his sufferings would have failed, and so must be made up in infinite duration, to atone for his own deficiency. But God having chosen Christ, he could not fail in this work, and so was delivered from his sufferings, from the eternity of them, by the electing love of God. Justification and glorification were fruits of God's foreknowledge and predestination in him, as well as in his elect members. So Christ's election is the foundation of ours, as much as his justification and glorification are the foundation of ours.

§ 32. 2 Thes ii. 13. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation,

through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Concerning this Scripture, I observe the following things: 1. The word translated *chosen*, is a word that signifies to choose or pick out from many others. 2. That this choosing is given as a reason, why those differ from others, that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, as an instance of the distinguishing grace of God: and therefore the apostle mentions their being chosen, their election, as the ground of their sanctification by the Spirit and belief of the truth. 3. The apostle speaks of their being chosen to salvation, as a ground of their perseverance, or the reason why they never shall fall away, as others spoken of before, whereby they failed of salvation. See the preceding verses. Compare Heb. vi. 9.—4. They are spoken of as thus chosen from the beginning.—And that place, Mat. xx. 21, 22, 23. "Grant that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom;—it shall be given to them, for whom it is prepared of my father;" affords an invincible argument for particular personal predestination.

§ 33. There were many absolute promises of old, that salvation should actually be accomplished, and that it should be of great extent, or extended to great multitudes of mankind; as, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." "In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Psalm cx. "Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power:" and innumerable others. And if there were absolute promises of this, then there were absolute purposes of it: for that which is sincerely absolutely promised, is with an absolute purpose of fulfilling the promise. But how can it be devised, that there should be an absolute, determinate, infallible, unchangeable purpose, that Christ should actually save vast multitudes of mankind; and yet it be not absolutely purposed that he should save any one single person, but that, with regard to every individual soul, this was left to be determined by man's contingent will, which might determine for salvation, or against it, there being nothing to render it impossible, concerning any one, that his will would not finally determine against it? Observe, these prophecies are not merely predictions, but are of the nature of promises, and are often so called:—"which he hath promised by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," &c. God takes care to fulfil his own promises;

but, according to this scheme, it is not God that fulfils these promises ; but men, left to themselves, to their contingent wills, fulfil them. Man's will, which God does not determine, determines itself in exclusion of God.

§ 34. Concerning that grand objection, that this doctrine supposes partiality in God, and is very dishonourable to him, being quite contrary to God's extensive and universal benevolence to his creatures : it may be shewn, that the Arminian notions and principles in this matter lead directly to Deism ; and that, on these principles, it is utterly impossible to answer Tindal's objections against revealed religion, especially in his 14th chapter. Besides, unjustifiable partiality is not imputable to a sovereign distribution of his favours, though ever so unequally, unless it be done unwisely, and so as to infringe the common good. God has regard to conditions in his decrees, as he has regard to a wise order and connexion of things. Such is his wisdom in his decrees, and all his acts and operations, that, if it were not for wise connexion that is regarded, many things would not be decreed. One part of the wise system of events would not have been decreed, unless the other parts had been decreed also.

§ 35. God in the decree of election is justly to be considered as decreeing the creature's eternal happiness, antecedently to any foresight of good works, in a sense wherein he does not in reprobation decree the creature's eternal misery, antecedently to any foresight of sin : Because the being of sin is supposed in the first place in order in the decree of reprobation, which is, that God will glorify his vindictive justice ; and the very notion of revenging justice, simply considered, supposes a fault to be revenged. But faith and good works are not supposed in the first place in order to the decree of election. The first things in order in this decree are, that God will communicate his happiness, and glorify his grace ; (for these two seem to be co-ordinate). But in neither of these are faith and good works supposed. For, when God decrees, and seeks to communicate his own happiness in the creature's happiness, the notion of this, simply considered, supposes or implies nothing of faith or good works ; nor does the notion of grace, in itself, suppose any such thing. It does not necessarily follow, from the very nature of grace, or God's communicativeness of his own happiness, that there must be faith and good works.

§ 36. What divines intend by *prior* and *posterior* in the affair of God's decrees, is, not that one is before another in the order of time; for all are from eternity: but that we must conceive the view or consideration of one decree to be before another, inasmuch as God decrees one thing out of respect to another decree, so that one decree must be conceived of as in some sort to be the ground of another; or that God decrees one because of another; or that he would not have decreed one, had he not decreed that other. Now, there are two ways in which divine decrees may be said to be in this sense prior one to another. 1. When one thing decreed is the end of another, this must in some respect be conceived of as prior to that other. The good to be obtained is in some respect prior, in the consideration of him who decrees and disposes, to the means of obtaining it. 2. When one thing decreed is the ground on which the disposer goes, in seeking such an end by another thing decreed, as being the foundation of the capableness or fitness that there is in that other thing decreed, to obtain such an end. Thus, the sinfulness of the reprobate is the ground on which God goes in determining to glorify his justice in the punishment of his sinfulness; because his sinfulness is the foundation of the possibility of obtaining that end by such means. His having sin, is the foundation of both the fitness and possibility of justice being glorified in the punishment of his sin; and therefore, the consideration of the being of sin in the subject, must in some respect be prior in the mind of the disposer, to the determination to glorify his justice in the punishment of sin. For the disposer must first consider the capableness and aptness of such means for such an end, before he determines them to such an end. Thus God must be conceived of, as first considering Adonibezek's cruelty in cutting off the thumbs and great toes of threescore and ten kings, as that which was to be, before he decreed to glorify his justice in punishing that cruelty, by the cutting off his thumbs and great toes. But this aptness depends on the nature of that sin that was punished. Therefore the disposer, in fixing on those means for this end, must be conceived of as having that sin in view. Because sinfulness is necessarily supposed as already existing in the decree of punishing sinfulness. That which stands in the place of the ultimate end in a decree, *i. e.* that which is a mere end, and not a means to any thing further or higher, *viz.* the shining forth of God's glory, and the communication of his goodness, must indeed be considered as prior, in the consideration of the supreme disposer,

to every thing, excepting the mere possibility of it. But this must in some respects be conceived of as prior to that, because possibility is necessarily supposed in his decree. But if we descend lower than the highest end; if we come down to other events decreed, that be not mere ends, but means to obtain that end, then we must necessarily bring in more things, as in some respect prior, in the same manner as mere possibility is in this highest decree. The vindictive justice of God is not to be considered as a mere or ultimate end, but as a means to an end. Indeed, God's glorifying his justice, or rather his glorifying his holiness and greatness, has the place of a mere and ultimate end. But his glorifying his justice in punishing sin, (or in exercising vindictive justice, which is the same), is not to be considered as a mere end, but a certain way or means of obtaining an end. Vindictive justice is not to be considered as a certain distinct attribute to be glorified, but as a certain way and means for the glorifying an attribute. Every distinct way of God's glorifying or exercising an attribute, might as well be called a distinct attribute as this. It is but giving a distinct name to it, and so we might multiply attributes without end. The considering of the glorifying of vindictive justice as a mere end, has led to great misrepresentations, and undue and unhappy expressions, about the decree of reprobation. Hence the glorifying of God's vindictive justice on such particular persons, has been considered as altogether prior in the decree to their sinfulness, yea to their very beings. Whereas it being only a means to an end, those things that are necessarily presupposed, in order to the fitness and possibility of this means of obtaining the end, must be conceived of as prior to it.

§ 37. Hence God's decree of the eternal damnation of the reprobate is not to be conceived of as prior to the fall, yea, and to the very being of the persons, as the decree of the eternal glory of the elect is. For God's glorifying his love, and communicating his goodness, stands in the place of a mere or ultimate end; and therefore is prior in the mind of the eternal disposer to the very being of the subject, and to every thing but mere possibility. The goodness of God gives the being, as well as the happiness of the creature, and does not presuppose it. Indeed, the glorifying of God's mercy, as it presupposes the subject to be miserable, and the glorifying his grace, as it presupposes the subject to be sinful, unworthy and ill-deserving, are not to be conceived of as ultimate ends, but

but only as certain ways and means for the glorifying the exceeding abundance and overflowing fullness of God's goodness and love; therefore these decrees are not to be considered as prior to the decree of the being of the subject. And the decree of election, as it implies a decree of glorifying God's mercy and grace, considers men as being cursed and fallen; because the very notion of such a decree supposes sin and misery. Hence we may learn, how much in the decree of predestination is to be considered as prior to the creation and fall of man, and how much as posterior; viz. that God's decree to glorify his love and communicate his goodness, and to glorify his greatness and holiness, is to be considered as prior to creation and the fall of man. And because the glory of God's love, and the communication of his goodness necessarily imply the happiness of the creature, and give both their being and happiness; hence the design to communicate and glorify his goodness and love externally to a certain number, is to be considered as prior, in both those mentioned respects, to their being and fall. For such a design, in the notion of it, presupposes neither. But nothing in the decree of reprobation is to be looked upon as antecedent to man's being and fall.

§ 38. The decrees of God must be conceived of in the same order, and as antecedent to, and consequent on one another, in the same manner, as God's acts in the execution of those decrees. They depend on one another, and are grounded on one another, in the same manner as the decrees that these are the execution of, and in no other. For, the decrees of God are no other than his eternal doing what is done, acted or executed by him in time. God's acts themselves, in executing, can be conceived of no otherwise, than as decrees for a present effect. They are acts of God's will. God brings things to pass only by acts of his will. He speaks, and it is done. His will says, let it be, and it is. And this act of his will that now is, cannot be looked upon as really different from that act of will that was in him before, and from eternity, in decreeing that this thing should be at this time. It differs only relatively. Here is no new act of the will in God, but only the same acts of will, which before, because the time was not come, respected future time; and so were called decrees. But now the time being come, they respect present time, and so are not called by us decrees,

but acts executing decrees. Yet they are evidently the same acts in God. Therefore those acts, in executing, must certainly be conceived of in the same order, and with the same dependence, as the decrees themselves. It may be in some measure illustrated by this:—The decree of God, or the will of God decreeing events, may be represented as a straight line of infinite length, that runs through all past eternity, and terminates in the event. The last point in the line, is the act of God's will in bringing the event to pass, and does not at all differ from all the other points throughout the infinite length of the line, in any other respect but this, that this last point is next to the event. This line may be represented as in motion, but yet always kept parallel to itself.

The hither end of the line, by its motion, describes events in the order in which they come to pass; or at least represents God's acts in bringing the events to pass, in their order and mutual dependence, antecedence and consequence. By the motion of all the other points of the line, before the event or end of the line, in the whole infinite length of it, are represented the decrees in their order; which, because the line in all its motions is kept parallel to itself, is exactly the same with the order of the motions of the last point. For the motion of every point of the whole line, is, in all respects, just like the motion of that last point wherein the line terminates in the event; and the different parts of the motion of every point, are in every respect precisely in the same order. And the maxim, that what is first in intention, is last in execution, does not in the least concern this matter. For, by last in execution, is meant only last in order of time, without any respect to the priority or posteriority that we are speaking of; and it does not at all hinder, but that in God's acts, in executing his decrees, one act is the ground or reason of another act, in the same manner precisely as the decree that related to it was the ground or reason of the other decree. The absolute independence of God, no more argues against some of God's decrees being grounded on decrees of some other things that should first come to pass, than it does against some of God's acts in time, being grounded on some other antecedent acts of his. It is just the same with God's act's in executing, as has been said already of his decreeing. In one respect, the end that is afterwards to be accomplished, is the ground of God's acting; in another respect, something that is already accomplished, is the ground of his acting, as it is the ground of the fitness or capableness of the act to

obtain the end. There is nothing but the ultimate end of all things, viz. God's glory, and the communication of his goodness, that is prior to all first acts in creating the world, in one respect, and mere possibility in another. But, with respect to after-acts, other ends are prior in one respect, and other preceding acts are prior in another, just as I have shewn it to be with respect to God's decrees.

§ 39. Now, this being established, it may help more clearly to illustrate, and fully to evidence, what we have insisted on concerning the order of the decrees, and that God's decrees of some things that are accomplished first in order of time, are also prior in the order, so as to be the proper ground and reason of other decrees. For, let us see how it is in God's acts in executing his decrees. Will any deny, that God's act in rewarding righteousness, is grounded on a foregoing act of his in giving righteousness? and that he rewards righteousness in such a person, because he hath given righteousness to such a person; and that because this latter act necessarily supposes the former act foregoing? So, in like manner, God's decree, in determining to reward righteousness is grounded on an antecedent decree to give righteousness, because the former decree necessarily supposes the latter decree, and implies it in the very notion of it. So, who will deny, but that God's act in punishing sin, is grounded on God's permitting sin, or suffering it to be, because the former necessarily supposes the latter, and therefore that the actual permission of sin is prior, in the order of nature, to the punishment of it?

§ 40. It may be objected to this, that if so, the decree of bestowing salvation on an elect soul, is founded on the decree of bestowing faith on him; for God actually bestows salvation in some respect, because he has bestowed faith; and this would be to make the decree of election succedaneous to the decree of giving faith. To this I answer, that both God's act, and also his decree of bestowing salvation on such a fallen creature, is, in some respects, grounded on God's act and decree of giving faith, but in nowise as the decree or act of eternal punishing is grounded on sin, because punishment necessarily presupposes sin, so that it could not be without it. But the decreeing and giving the happiness of the elect, is not so founded on faith. The case is very different. Indeed, the salvation of an elect soul is, in this respect, grounded on

the decree of giving faith, as God's decree of bestowing happiness on the elect is in this particular way. But the decree of bestowing happiness in general, which we conceive of as antecedent to this act, presupposes no such thing; nor does just so much without any more in execution presuppose faith, or indeed the righteousness of Christ, or any act or suffering of a mediator, or even the fall of man. And the decree of God's communicating his goodness to such a subject, does not so much as presuppose the being of the subject; because it gives being. But there is no decree of evil to such a subject, which can be conceived of as antecedent to a decree of punishment.

§ 41. The objection to the divine decrees will be, that according to this doctrine, God may do evil, that good may come of it. *Ans.* I do not argue, that God may commit evil, that good may come of it; but that he may permit that it may come to pass, that good may come of it. It is in itself absolutely evil, for any being to commit evil, that good may come of it; and the only reason why it would not be lawful for a creature to *permit* evil to come to pass, and that it would not be wise, or good and virtuous in him so to do, is, that he has not perfect wisdom and sufficiency, so as to render it fit that such an affair should be trusted with him. In so doing, he goes beyond his line; he goes out of his province; he meddles with things too high for him. It is every one's duty to do things fit for him in his sphere, and commensurate to his power. God never intrusted this providence in the hands of creatures of finite understandings; nor is it proper that he should.

If a prince were of perfect and all-comprehensive wisdom and foresight, and he should see that an act of treason would be for the great advancement of the welfare of his kingdom, it might be wise and virtuous in him to permit that such act of treason should come to pass; yea, it would be foolish and wrong if he did not. It would be prudent and wise in him *not to restrain* the traitor, but to let him alone to go on in the way he chose. And yet he might hate the treason at the same time; and he might properly, also, give forth laws at the same time, forbidding it upon pain of death, and might hold these laws in force against this traitor.

§ 42. The Arminians themselves allow, that God permits sin; and that if he permits it, it will come to pass. But it is demonstrably true, that if God sees that good will come of it, and more good than otherwise, so that when the whole

series of events is viewed by God, and all things are balanced—the sum of good with the evil being more than without it, all being subtracted that needs be subtracted, and added that is to be added—the sum total of good is greater than the sum in any other case, then it will follow, that God, if he be a wise and holy being, must permit it.—For if this sum total be really the best, how can it be otherwise than that it should be chosen by an infinitely wise and good being, whose holiness and goodness consists in always choosing what is best? Which does it argue most, wisdom or folly, a good disposition or an evil one, when two things are set before a being, the one better and the other worse, to choose the worse, and refuse the better?

§ 43. To conclude this discourse: I wish the reader to consider the unreasonableness of rejecting plain revelations, because they are puzzling to our reason. So that though the doctrine of the decrees be mysterious, and attended with difficulties, yet the opposite doctrine is in itself more mysterious, and attended with greater difficulties, and with contradictions to reason more evident, to one who thoroughly considers things; so that, even if the scripture had made no revelation of it, we should have had reason to believe it. But, since the scripture is so abundant in declaring it, the unreasonableness of rejecting it appears the more glaring.

CHAP. IV.

CONCERNING EFFICACIOUS GRACE.

§ 1. **I**T is manifest that the scripture supposes, that if ever men are turned from sin, God must undertake it, and he must be the doer of it; that it is his doing that must determine the matter; that all that others can do, will avail nothing, without his agency. This is manifest by such texts as these, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; Thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh," &c. Lam. v. 21. "Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned." Psalm lxxx. 3. "Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." The same in verse 7. and 19.: Jer. xvii. 14. "Heal me and I shall be healed: save me and I shall be saved; for Thou art my praise."

§ 2. According to Dr. Whitby's notion of the assistance of the Spirit, the Spirit of God does nothing in the hearts or minds of men beyond the power of the devil; nothing but what the devil can do; and nothing shewing any greater power in any respect, than the devil shews and exercises in his temptations. For he supposes, that all that the Spirit of God does, is to bring moral motives and inducements to mind, and set them before the understanding, &c. It is possible that God may infuse grace, in some instances, into the minds of such persons as are striving to obtain it in the other way, though they may not observe it, and may not know that it is not obtained by gradual acquisition: But if a man has indeed sought it only in that way, and with as much dependence on himself, and with as much neglect of God, in his endeavours and prayers, as such a doctrine naturally leads to, it is not very likely that he should obtain saving grace by the efficacious mighty power of God. It is most likely that God should bestow this gift, in a way of earnest attention to divine truth, and the use of the means of grace, with reflection on one's own sinfulness, and in a way of being more and more convinced of

sinfulness, and total corruption and need of the divine power to restore the heart, to infuse goodness, and of becoming more and more sensible of one's own impotence, and inability to obtain goodness by his own strength. And if a man has obtained no other virtue, than what seems to have been wholly in that gradual and insensible way that might be expected from use and custom, in the exercise of his own strength, he has reason to think, however bright his attainments may seem to be, that he has no saving virtue.—Great part of the gospel is denied by those who deny pure efficacious grace. They deny that wherein actual salvation and the application of redemption mainly consists; and how unlikely are such to be successful in their endeavours after actual salvation?

§ 3. Concerning the supposition advanced by Bishop Butler, and by Turnbull in his *Christian Philosophy*, that all that God does, even miracles themselves, are wrought according to general laws, such as are called the laws of nature, though unknown to us; and the supposition of Turnbull, that all may be done by angels acting by general laws: I observe, this seems to be unreasonable. If angels effect these works, acting only by general laws, then they must do them without any immediate, special interposition at all, even without the smallest intimation of the divine mind, what to do, or upon what occasion God would have any thing to be done. And what will this doctrine bring inspiration to, which is one kind of miracle? According to this, all significations of the divine mind, even to the prophets and apostles, must be according to general laws, without any special interposition at all of the divine agency.

§ 4. Acts xii. 23. God was so angry with Herod for not giving him the glory of his eloquence, that the angel of the Lord smote him immediately, and he died a miserable death; he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. But if it be very sinful for a man to take to himself the glory of such a qualification as eloquence, how much more a man's taking to himself the glory of divine grace, God's own image, and that which is infinitely God's most excellent, precious and glorious gift, and man's highest honour, excellency and happiness, whereby he is partaker of the divine nature, and becomes a godlike creature? If God was so jealous for the glory of so small a gift, how much more for so high an endowment, this being that alone, of all other things, by which man becomes

like God? If not giving God the glory of that which is least honourable, provokes God's jealousy; much more must not giving God the glory of that which is infinitely the most honourable. It is allowed, the apostle insists upon it, that the primitive Christians should be sensible that the glory of their gifts belonged to God, and that they made not themselves to differ. But how small a matter is this, if they make themselves to differ in that, which the apostle says is so much more excellent than all gifts? How much more careful has God shewn himself, that men should not be proud of their virtue, than of any other gift? see Deut. ix. 4. Luke xviii. 9. and innumerable other places. And the apostle plainly teaches us to ascribe to God the glory, not only of our redemption, but of our wisdom, righteousness and sanctification; 1 Cor. i. 29, 30, 31. Again, the apostle plainly directs, that all that glory in their virtue, should glory in the Lord, 2 Cor. x. 17. It is glorying in virtue and virtuous deeds he is there speaking of; and it is plain, that the apostle uses the expression of glorying in the Lord, in such a sense, as to imply ascribing the glory of our virtue to God. The doctrine of men's being the determining causes of their own virtue, teaches them, not to do so much, as even the proud Pharisee did, who thanked God for making him to differ from other men in virtue, Luke xviii. See Gen. xli. 15, 16.; Job. xi. 12.; Dan. ii. 25.

§ 5. The Arminian doctrine, and the doctrine of our new philosophers, concerning the habits of virtue being only by custom, discipline, and gradual culture, joined with the other doctrine, that the obtaining of these habits in those that have time for it, is in every man's power, according to their doctrine of the freedom of will, tends exceedingly to cherish presumption in sinners, while in health and vigour, and tends to their utter despair, in sensible approaches of death by sickness or old age.

§ 6. The question relating to efficacious grace, controverted between us and the Arminians, are two: 1. Whether the grace of God, in giving us saving virtue, be determining and decisive. 2. Whether saving virtue be decisively given by a supernatural and sovereign operation of the Spirit of God: or, whether it be only by such a divine influence or assistance, as is imparted in the course of common providence, either according to established laws of nature, or established laws of God's universal providence towards mankind: *i. e.*

either, 1. Assistance which is given in all natural actions, wherein men do merely exercise and improve the principles and laws of nature, and come to such attainments as are connected with such exercises by the mere laws of nature. For there is an assistance in all such natural actions; because it is by a divine influence that the laws of nature are upheld; and a constant concurrence of divine power is necessary in order to our living, moving, or having a being. This we may call a natural assistance. Or, 2. That assistance which, though it be something besides the upholding of the laws of nature, (which take place in all affairs of life), is yet, by a divine universal constitution in this particular affair of religion, so connected with those voluntary exercises which result from this mere natural assistance, that by this constitution it indiscriminately extends to all mankind, and is certainly connected with such exercises and improvements as those just mentioned, by a certain established known rule, as much as any of the laws of nature. This kind of assistance, though many Arminians call it a supernatural assistance, differs little or nothing from that natural assistance that is established by a law of nature. The law so established, is only a particular law of nature; as some of the laws of nature are more general, others more particular: But this establishment, which they suppose to be by divine promise, differs nothing at all from many other particular laws of nature, except only in this circumstance of the established constitutions being revealed in the word of God, while others are left to be discovered only by experience.

The Calvinists suppose otherwise; they suppose that divine influence and operation, by which saving virtue is obtained, is entirely different from, and above common assistance, or that which is given in a course of ordinary providence, according to universally established laws of nature. They suppose a principle of saving virtue is immediately imparted and implanted by that operation, which is sovereign and efficacious in this respect, that its effect proceeds not from any established laws of nature. I mention this as an entirely different question from the other, viz. Whether the grace of God, by which we obtain saving virtue, is determining or decisive. For that it may be, if it be given wholly in a course of nature, or by such an operation as is limited and regulated perfectly according to established invariable laws. For none will dispute that many things are brought to pass by God in this

manner, that are decisively ordered by him, and are brought to pass by his determining providence.

§ 7. The controversy, as it relates to efficacious grace in this sense, includes in it these four questions.

1. Whether saving virtue differs from common virtue, or such virtue as those have that are not in a state of salvation, in nature and kind, or only in degree and circumstances?

2. Whether a holy disposition of heart, as an internal governing principle of life and practice, be immediately implanted or infused in the soul, or only be contracted by repeated acts, and obtained by human culture and improvement?

3. Whether conversion, or the change of a person from being a vicious or wicked man, to a truly virtuous character, be instantaneous or gradual?

4. Whether the divine assistance or influence, by which men obtain true and saving virtue, be sovereign and arbitrary, or, whether God, in giving this assistance and its effects, limits himself to certain exact and stated rules revealed in his word, and established by his promises?

§ 8. Eph. i. 19, 20. "What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, according to the working of his mighty power," or the effectual working, as the word signifies.—These words, *according to the effectual working of his power*, we shall find applied to conversion, to growth in grace, and to raising us up at last. You have them applied to conversion, Eph. iii. 7. "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given to me, by the *effectual working of his power*." So likewise to growth in grace, Eph. iv. 10. "The whole body increaseth with the increase of God, by the *effectual working* in the measure of every part." And to the resurrection to glory at the last day, Philip. iii. 21. "He will change our vile bodies, according to the *effectual working* of his mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself." It was natural for the apostle to put them in mind of the power of God manifested in their conversion, as he would strengthen their faith in his power to raise them at the last day, and glorify them to eternity. Besides, what the apostle says in the continuation of his discourse, explains his meaning, and puts the matter of his intending to include the power of God manifested in their conversion, out of all doubt :

as, in the very next sentence, “and you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; and every word that follows to the end of the second chapter, confirms the same thing.

§ 9. Some pretend, that in this expression, (Col. ii. 13.) *through the faith of the operation of God*, there is no respect to God’s operation as the efficient cause of faith; but only to the operation of God that raised Christ, as the object of faith, which believes that power and operation as it was manifested in raising Christ, and which is believed to be sufficient to raise us up also. But that the apostle means the operation of God in giving faith, appears by verse 11. which introduces these words, where the apostle says, “In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.” This phrase, *made without hands*, in scripture, always denotes God’s immediate power, above the course of nature, and above second causes. Thus, when he speaks of heaven, 2 Cor. v. 1. he calls it “an house not made with hands;” and in Heb. ix. 11. the human nature of Christ, which was framed by so wonderful and supernatural a power of the Holy Ghost, is said to be a “tabernacle made without hands.”*

§ 10. It is a doctrine mightily in vogue, that God has promised his saving grace to men’s sincere endeavours in praying for it, and using proper means to obtain it; and so, that it is not God’s mere will that determines the matter, whether we have saving grace or not; but that the matter is left with us, to be determined by the sincerity of our endeavours.

But there is vast confusion in all talk of this kind, for want of its being well explained what is meant by *sincerity of endeavour*, and through men’s deceiving themselves by using words without a meaning. I think the Scripture knows of but one sort of sincerity in religion, and that is a truly pious or holy sincerity. The Bible suggests no notion of any other sort of sincere obedience, or any other sincerity of endeavours, or any doings whatsoever in religion, than doing from love to God and true love to our duty. As to those who endeavour and take pains, (let them do ever so much), but yet do nothing freely, or from any true love to, or delight in God, or free inclination to virtue, but wholly for by-ends,

* See Dr. GOODWIN’S works, vol. I. p. 298, &c.

and from sinister and mercenary views, as being driven and forced against their inclination, or induced by regard to things foreign; I say, respecting such as these, I find nothing in scripture that should lead us to call them honest and sincere in their endeavours. I doubt not but that the scripture promises supernatural, truly divine and saving blessings, to such a sincerity of endeavour as arises from true love to our duty. But then, as I apprehend, this is only to promise more saving grace to him that seeks it in the exercise of saving grace, agreeable to that repeated saying of our Saviour, "to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." Persons, in seeking grace with this sincerity, ask in faith; they seek these blessings in the exercise of a saving faith. And, I suppose, promises are made to no sincerity, but what implies this.

§ 11. On the supposition that the promises of saving grace are made to some other sincerity of endeavour than that which implies true saving piety of heart, they must be made to an undetermined condition, and so be in effect no promises at all. If there be any thing else worthy to be called sincerity in endeavouring after holiness, but a free pious inclination, or true regard and love to holiness, nothing better can be mentioned than this, viz. endeavours after holiness, from a real willingness of heart to put forth those endeavours *for the agent's own sake*, for such ends as prudence and *self-love* would propose; such as, his own eternal interest, salvation from everlasting misery, &c. But the thing that truly in this case denominates the endeavour *sincere*, is the reality of the will or disposition of heart to endeavour, and not the goodness of the will or disposition. Now, if this be the sincerity of endeavour which is meant, when men talk of its being the condition of peremptory and decisive promises of saving grace, then it never has yet been told, and, I suppose, never will or can be told, what the condition of the promise is.

The thing that needs to be determined, in order to know this condition, is, how great a degree of this sort of sincerity, or real willingness of heart to endeavour, a man must have, to be entitled to the promise. For there can be no question, but that the multitudes who live in gross wickedness, and are *men* of a very debauched flagitious behaviour, have some degree of it; and every man whatsoever, that uses any endeavour at all for his salvation, or ever performs any

religious duty, to the end that he may go to heaven and not to hell, has this sincerity. For whatever men do voluntarily for this end, they do from a real willingness and disposition of heart to do it; for if they were not willing to do it, they would not do it. There surely are no voluntary actions performed without men's being willing to perform them. And is there any man that will assert, that God has absolutely or peremptorily promised his saving grace to any man that ever stirs hand or foot, or thinks one thought in order to his salvation?

§ 12. And, on the other hand, as to those that go farthest in their endeavours, still they fail, in numberless instances, of exercising this kind of sincerity, consisting in reality of will. For such are guilty of innumerable sins; and every man that commits sin, by so doing, instead of being sincerely willing to do his duty, sincerely wills the contrary. For so far as any actions of his are his sin, so far his will is in what he does. No action is imputed to us any farther than it is voluntary, and involves the real disposition of the heart. The man, in this painful endeavour, fails continually of his duty, or (which is the same thing) of perfect obedience. And so far as he does so, he fails of sincerity of endeavour. No man is any farther defective in his obedience, than as he is defective in sincerity: for there the defect lies, viz. in his will, and the disposition of his heart. If men were perfect in these, that would be the same thing as to be perfect in obedience, or complete in holiness. Nothing, either of omission or commission, is sin, any farther than it includes the real disposition and will: and therefore, no men are any farther sinful, than as they are sincere in sinning; and so far as they are sincere in sinning, so far they are deficient of sincerely endeavouring their duty. Now, therefore, where are the bounds to which men must come, in order to be entitled to the promise? Some have a faint sincerity of endeavour, who none do suppose are entitled to the promise. And those that have most sincerity of endeavour, do greatly fail of that degree of sincerity that they ought to have, or fall short of that which God requires. And there are infinite degrees between these two classes. And if every degree of strength of endeavour is not sufficient, and yet some certain degree of it, greatly short of that which God requires, is sufficient, then let it be determined, what that degree is.

§ 13. Some have determined thus, that if men sincerely

endeavour to do what they can, God has promised to help them to do more, &c. But this question remains to be resolved, whether the condition of the promise be, that he shall sincerely endeavour to do what he can, *constantly*, or only *sometimes*. For there is no man that sincerely endeavours to do his duty to the utmost constantly, with this sort of sincerity consisting in reality of will so to do. If he did, he would perfectly do his duty at all times. For, as was observed before, nothing else is required but the will; and men never fail of their duty, or commit sin, but when their real will is to sin.—But if the condition of the promise, be sincerely doing what they can *sometimes*, then it should be declared how often, or how great a part of the time of man's life, he must exercise this sincerity? It is manifest that men fail of their duty every day, yea continually; and therefore, that there is a continual defect of sincerity of endeavour in the practice of duty.

If it should be said, that the condition of the promise of saving grace is, that, take one time with another, and one duty with another, the sincerity of their will should be chiefly in favour of their duty; or, in other words, that they should be sincere in endeavours to do more than half their duty, though they sincerely neglect the rest: I would inquire, where they find such promises as these in the Bible? Besides, I think it can be demonstrated, that there is not a man on earth, that ever comes up half way to what the law of God requires of him; and consequently, that there is in all more want of sincerity, than any actual possession of it. But whether it be so or no, how does it appear, that if men are sincere in endeavours with respect to more than half their duty, God has promised them saving mercy and grace, though through a defect of their sincerity the rest be neglected?

§ 14. But if we suppose the sincerity to which divine promises are made, implies a true freedom of the heart in religious endeavours and performances, consisting in love to God and holiness, inclining our hearts to our duty for its own sake, here is something determinate and precise; as a title to the benefit promised, does not depend on any particular degree of sincerity to be found out by difficult and unsearchable rules of mathematical calculation, but on the nature of it; this sincerity being a thing of an entirely distinct nature and kind from any thing that is to be found in those men who have no interest in the promises. If men know they have this sin-

cerity, they may know the promises are theirs, though they may be sensible they have very much of a contrary principle in their hearts, the operations of which are as real as of this. This is the only sincerity in religion that the scripture makes any account of. According to the word of God, then, and then only, is there a sincere universal obedience, when persons love all God's commands, and love all those things wherein holiness consists, and endeavour after obedience to every divine precept, from love and of free choice. Otherwise, in scripture account, there is nothing but sincere disobedience and rebellion, without any sincerity of the contrary. For their disobedience is of free choice, from sincere love to sin, and delight in wickedness. But their refraining from some sins, and performing some external duties, is without the least degree of free choice and sincere love.

If here it should be said, that men who have no piety of heart in a saving degree, yet may have some degree of love to virtue; and it should be insisted that mankind are born with a moral sense, which implies a natural approbation of, and love to virtue; and therefore, men that have not the principle of love to God and virtue established to that degree as to be truly pious men, and entitled to heaven, yet may have such degrees as to engage them, with ingenuous sincerity and free inclination to seek after farther degrees of virtue, and so with a sincerity above that which has been mentioned, viz. a real willingness to use endeavours from fear and self-interest:—It may be replied, If this be allowed, it will not at all help the matter. For still the same question returns, viz. what degree of this sincerity is it that constitutes the precise condition of the promise? It is supposed that all mankind have this moral sense; but yet it is not supposed that all mankind are entitled to the promises of saving mercy. Therefore the promises depend, as above noticed, on the degree of sincerity, under the same difficulties, and with the same intricacies, and all the forementioned unfixedness and uncertainty. And other things concerning this sincerity, besides the degree of it, are undetermined, viz. how constant this degree of sincerity of endeavour must be; how long it must be continued; and how early it must be begun. Thus, it appears that, on the supposition of God's having made any promises of saving grace to the sincere endeavours of ungodly men, it will follow, that such promises are made to an undetermined condition. But a supposed promise to an undetermined condition, is truly no promise at all. It is absurd to talk of positive determinate

promises made to something not determined, or to a condition, that is not fixed in the promise. If the condition be not decided, there is nothing decisive in the affair. If the master of a family should give forth such a pretended promise as this to his servants, "I promise, that if any of you will do something, though I tell you not what, I will surely give him an inheritance among my children:" Would this be truly any promise at all?

§ 15. On the supposition that the promises of saving grace are made to some other sincerity of endeavour, than that which implies truly pious sincerity, the sovereign grace and will of God must determine the existence of the condition of the promises; and that in which some are distinguished from others; none supposing that all mankind, without exception, have this sincerity which is the condition of the promises. Therefore, this sincerity must be a distinguishing attainment. And how is it that some attain to it, and not others? It must be in one of these two ways; either by the sovereign gift of God's will, or by their endeavours. To say the former, is to give up the point, and to own that the sovereign grace and will of God determines the existence of the condition of the promises. But if it be said, that this distinguishing sincerity is obtained by men's own *endeavour*, then I ask, what sort of endeavour? Sincere endeavour, or insincere? None will be so absurd, as to say, that this great condition of saving promises is attained to by insincere endeavours? But if it be said, that distinguishing sincerity of endeavour is attained to by distinguishing *sincere* endeavour, this is to run round in a ridiculous circle; and still the difficulty remains, and the question returns, how the distinguishing sincerity that first of all took place in the affair came to have existence, otherwise than by the determining grace of God?

§ 16. If we suppose that distinguishing sincerity of endeavour by which some men are interested in the promises of saving grace, and not others, to be some certain degree of love to virtue, or any thing else in the disposition or exercise of the heart yet it must be owned, that all men either are alike by nature, as to love to virtue, or they are not. If they are not, but some have naturally a greater love to virtue than others, and this determines some, rather than others, to the requisite sincerity of endeavour after saving grace; then God determines the affair by his sovereign will; for he, and not

men themselves, determines all distinguishing qualifications or advantages than men are born with. Or if there be no difference naturally, but one man is born with the same love to virtue as another; then, how do some men first attain to more of this love to virtue than others, and so possess that distinguishing sincerity of endeavour which consists in it? To say it arises from a previous distinguishing sincerity of endeavour, attempt, desire, or will, is a contradiction. Therefore, it must proceed from the determining grace of God; which being allowed, the great point in dispute is allowed.

§ 17. The assistance by which God assists a drunkard that goes to the tavern, and there drinks excessively, or by which he assists an adulterer or pirate in their actions, is, that he upholds the laws of nature, the laws of the nature of the human soul, whereby it is able to perform such and such acts in such order and dependence; and the laws of the union of soul and body; and moves the body in such a stated manner in consequence of such acts of the soul, and upholds the laws of motion, and causes that there shall be such and such effects in corporeal things, and also of men's minds in consequence of such motions. All the difference is, it seems, that the assistance which he grants in the duties of religion, is according to a newer establishment than the other, according to a method established a little later; and also, that the method of assistance, in the one case, is written and revealed by way of promise or covenant, and not in the other.

But if it be said, that though God has promised assistance, yet he has not promised the exact degree, as, notwithstanding his promise, he has left himself at liberty to assist some, much more than others, in consequence of the very same endeavour: I answer, that this will prove a giving up of their whole scheme, and will infallibly bring in the Calvinistical notion of sovereign and arbitrary grace; whereby some, with the very same sincerity of endeavour, with the same degree of endeavour, and the same use of means, nay, although all things are exactly equal in both cases, both as to their persons and behaviour; yet one has that success by sovereign grace and God's arbitrary pleasure, that is not given to another. If God has left himself no liberty of sovereign grace in giving success to man's endeavours, but his consequent assistance be always tied to such endeavours precisely, then man's success is just as much in

his own power, and is in the same way the fruit of his own doings, as the effect and fulfilment of his endeavours to commit adultery or murder; and indeed much more. For his success in those endeavours, may be providentially disappointed. Although particular motions follow such and such acts of will, in such a state of body, exactly according to certain laws of nature; yet a man's success in such wickedness, is not at all tied to his endeavours by any divine establishment, as the Arminians suppose success is to man's endeavours after conversion. For the Spirit of God, by assisting in the alledged manner, becomes not the efficient cause of those things, as the Scriptures do certainly represent him. If God be not the proper bestower, author, and efficient cause of virtue, then the greatest benefits flow not from him; are not owing to his goodness; nor have we him to thank for them.

§ 18. Dr. Whitby's inconsistency appears in that one while, when he is disputing against the decree of election, he maintains that the epistles, where the apostle speaks to the elect, are not written to the converted only; because then it suits his turn that the persons addressed should not be converted. But afterwards, when disputing against efficacious grace, he maintains that where the apostle says, "God worketh in you both to will and to do," &c. Philip. ii. 13. he speaks only to them that are converted, p. 288. Again, when it suits the Doctor's turn, when writing about perseverance, then all whom the apostles write to are true saints. As particularly those the apostle Peter writes to, that had *precious faith*, p. 399. And the Galatians addressed in Paul's epistle, p. 401, 402.

§ 19. Arminians argue that God has obliged himself to bestow a holy and saving disposition, on certain conditions, and that what is given is given in regeneration, is given either for natural men's asking, or for the diligent improvement of common grace; because, otherwise, it would not be our fault that we are without it, nor our virtue that we have it. But if this reasoning is just, the holy qualities obtained by the regenerate, are only the fruits of virtue, not virtues themselves. All the virtue lies in asking, and in the diligent improvement of common grace!

§ 20. Prov. xxi. 1. "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; he turneth it

whithersoever he will." This shews that the Arminian notion of liberty of will, is inconsistent with the scripture notion of God's providence and government of the world. See also Jer. xxxi. 18. "Turn me, and I shall be turned." Matt. vii. 18. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Let us understand this how we will, it destroys the Arminian notion of liberty, and virtue and vice. For, if it means only a great difficulty; then so much the less liberty, and therefore so much the less virtue or vice. And the preceding verse would be false, which says, "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit," &c. Rom. viii. 6, 7, 8, 9. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The design of the apostle in this place, overthrows Arminian notions of liberty, virtue and vice. It appears from scripture, that God gives such assistance to virtue and virtuous acts, as to be properly a determining assistance, so as to determine the effect; which is inconsistent with the Arminian notion of liberty. The scripture shews that God's influence in the case is such, that he is the cause of the effect: he causes it to be: which shews that his influence determines the matter, whether it shall be or not. Otherwise, innumerable expressions of scripture are exceedingly improper, and altogether without a meaning.

§ 21. Dr. Whitby's notion of the assistance of the Spirit, is of the same sort with inspiration. Whereas that which I suppose is the true notion, is entirely different. Consequently their notion is much more enthusiastical, does much better agree with, and much more expose to pernicious enthusiasm, than ours. Hence we find, that the grossest enthusiasts, are generally Arminians in the doctrines of free-will, &c.

§ 22. Scripture expressions are every where contrary to the Arminian scheme, according to all use of language in the world in these days. But then they have their refuge here. They say, the ancient figures of speech are exceedingly diverse from ours; and that we in this distant age cannot judge at all of the true sense of expression used so long ago, but by

a skill in antiquity, and being versed in ancient history, and critically skilled in the ancient languages: not considering, that scriptures were written for us in these ages on whom the ends of the world are come: yea, were designed chiefly for the latter age of the world, in which they shall have their chief, and, comparatively, almost all their effect. They were written for God's people in those ages, of whom at least ninety-nine in an hundred must be supposed incapable of such knowledge, by their circumstances and education; and nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand of God's people, that hitherto have been saved by the scriptures. It is easy, by certain methods of interpretation, to refine and criticise any book to a sense most foreign to the mind of the author.

§ 23. The vast pretences of Arminians to an accurate and clear view of the scope and design of the sacred penmen, and a critical knowledge of the original, will prove for ever vain and insufficient to help them against such clear evidence as the scripture exhibits concerning efficacious grace. I desire it may be shewn, if it can be, that ever any terms fuller and stronger, are used more frequently, or in greater variety, to signify God's being the author, efficient and bestower of any kind of benefit, than as to the bestowment of true virtue or goodness of heart, the giving the means of grace and salvation; the giving Christ, and providing means of salvation in him? Yea, I know of no one thing in scripture wherein such significant, strong expressions are used, in so great variety, or one half so often, as the bestowment of this benefit of true goodness and piety of heart. But, after all, we must be faced down in it with vast confidence, that the scriptures do not imply any more than only exhibiting *means* of instruction, leaving the determining and proper causing of the effect wholly with man, as the only proper efficient and determining cause; and that the current of scripture is all against us; and that it is because we do not understand language, and are bigots and fools for imagining any such thing as that the scriptures say any thing of that nature; and because the divines on our side do not understand Greek, and do not lay the scripture before them, nor mind the scope of scripture, nor consider the connection, &c. &c. Perhaps it will be said, that every one of those scriptures, which are brought to prove efficacious grace, may have another interpretation, found out by careful and critical examination. But, alas! is that the way of the

Most High's instructing mankind, to use such a multitude of expressions in different languages, and various different ages, all which, in their natural and most common acceptation, in all languages, nations and ages, must undoubtedly be understood in a particular sense; yea, that the whole thread and current of all that God says, according to the use of speech among mankind, tends to lead to such an understanding, and so unavoidably leads his people in all ages into such an understanding; but yet, that he means no such thing; intending only that the true meaning should not be found out, but by the means of acute criticism, which might possibly hit upon the strange, unusual, and surprising meaning?

§ 24. Instead of persons being the determining and efficient causes of their own virtue and piety after all the moral means God uses with man: Let us suppose some third person between God and the subject of this gift of virtue, to be in the very same manner the sovereignly determining cause and efficient of virtue; that he had power to bestow it on us, or cause us to be the subjects of it, just in the same manner as the Arminians suppose we ourselves have power to be the causes of our being the subjects of virtue; and that it depended on this third person's free-will, just in the same manner as now they suppose our having virtue depends on our own free-will; and that God used moral means with that third person to bestow virtue on us, just in the same manner that he uses moral means to persuade us to cause virtue in ourselves, and the moral means had the like tendency to operate on his will as on ours; but finally, it was left entirely to his free-will to be the sole determining cause whether we should have virtue, without any such influence on his will as in the least to insure his sovereignty, and arbitrary disposal, and perfectly free self-determination; and it should be left contingent, whether he would bestow it or not; and, in these circumstances, this third person should happen to determine in our favour, and bestow virtue: Now, I ask, would it be proper to ascribe the matter so wholly to God, in such strong terms, and in such a great variety; to ascribe it so entirely to him as his gift; to pray to him beforehand for it; to give him thanks, to give him all the glory, &c.? On the contrary, would not this determining cause, whose arbitrary, self-determined, self-possessed, sovereign will, decides the matter, be properly looked upon as the main cause, vastly the most proper cause, the truest author and bestower of the benefit?

would not he be, as it were, all in the cause? would not the glory properly belong to him, on whose pleasure the determination of the matter properly depended?

§ 25. By regeneration, being new creatures, raised from death in sin, in the New Testament, is now meant according to Dr. Taylor, merely persons being brought into the state and privileges of professing Christians. When Christ says unto Nicodemus, John iii. 3. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." he does not mean merely, that unless a man be brought to a participation of the new state and privileges of the Christian Church, he cannot enter on the possession and privileges of the Christian Church; for that would be nonsense, and only to say, unless a man be born again, he cannot be born again; or, unless a man enter into the new state of things, as erected by the Messiah, he cannot enter on the new state of things as erected by the Messiah. Nor can he mean, that unless a man be a professing Christian, he cannot see the future and eternal privileges of the kingdom of heaven; for he supposes many heathens will see the kingdom of God in that sense. And how unreasonable would it be to suppose that Christ would teach this doctrine of the necessity of being instated in his new modelled church, as such a great, important, and main doctrine of his! See how evidently being born of God signifies something else than a being brought into the state of professing Christians; 1 John ii. 29. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him." Chap. iii. "Whatsoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Chap. iv. 8. "Every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." Chap. v. 4. "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world." Verse 18. "We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself: and that wicked one toucheth him not."

So it is exceeding apparent, that knowing God, and being of God, and in God, having this hope in him, &c. mean something beside our Christian profession, and principles, and privileges. 1 John ii. 3, &c. "Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. Hereby know we that we are in him." Chap. iii. "Every one that

hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Chap. iii. 14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Chap. iv. 12. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us."

§ 26. Why does the apostle say, concerning apostates, "*they were not of us* : if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us ; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us : if it be, as Dr. Taylor supposes, that professing Christians are in deed of the society of Christians to all intents and purposes, have all their privileges, are truly the children of God, members of Christ, of the household of God, saints, believers that have obtained like precious faith, are all one body, have one spirit, one faith, one inheritance, have their hearts purified and sanctified, are all the children of light, are all of the household of God, fellow-citizens with the saints, have all fellowship with Christ, &c. ?

§ 27. It is true, the nation of the Jews are in the Old Testament said to be elected, called, created, made, formed, redeemed, delivered, saved, bought, purchased, begotten. But particular Jews are no where so spoken of, at least with reference to the same thing, viz. their national redemption, when they were brought out of Egypt, &c.

David, in the book of Psalms, though he is so abundant there in giving thanks to God for his mercies, and is also so frequent in praising God for redeeming his people out of Egypt, and the salvation he wrought for the nation and church of Israel at that time ; yet he never once blesses God (having respect to that salvation) that God had chosen him and redeemed him, bought him, regenerated him ; never (having reference to that affair) speaks in the language of the apostle, "He loved me, and gave himself for me ;" though he often speaks of the blessedness of those men God had chosen, and caused to come nigh unto him, agreeably to the language of the New Testament, and often blesses God for redeeming and saving him in particular ; but never, in any of these things, has he respect to those national privileges ; nor indeed any other of the penmen of the Psalms ; which is very strange, if the privilege of being bought, made, created, &c. as applied to the nation of the Jews, be that which the apostle in the New Testament applies to himself in particular, and

which this and the other apostles applied to many other particular persons.

§ 28. That professing Christians are said to be sanctified, washed, &c. does not argue, that all professing Christians are so in fact. For Taylor himself says, "it should be carefully observed, that it is very common in the sacred writings, to express not only our Christian privileges, but also the duty to which they oblige, in the present or preterperfect tense; or to speak of that as done, which only ought to be done, and which, in fact, may possibly never be done: as in Mat. v. 13. "Ye are the salt of the earth," that is, ye ought to be. Rom. ii. 4. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance;" that is, ought to lead thee: chap. vi. 2. chap. viii. 9.; Col. iii. 3. This overthrows all his supposed proofs, that those which he calls antecedent blessings, do really belong to all professing Christians.

§ 29. The case was quite otherwise in the Christian church with regard to election, redemption, creation, &c. from what it was with the Jews. With the Jews, election, their redemption out of Egypt, their creation, was a national thing; it began with them as a nation, and descended, as it were, from the nation, to particular persons. Particular persons were first of the nation and church of the Jews; so, by that means, had an interest in their election, redemption, &c. that God wrought of old. The being of the nation and church of Israel, was the ground of a participation in these privileges. But it is evidently contrariwise in Christians. With regard to them, the election, redemption, creation, regeneration, &c. are personal things. They begin with particular persons, and ascend to public societies. Men are first redeemed, bought, created, regenerated, and by that means become members of the Christian church; and this is the ground of their membership. Paul's regeneration, and Christ's loving him, and giving himself for him, was the foundation of his being of the Christian church, that holy nation, peculiar people, &c.; whereas David being one of the nation of Israel, is the proper ground of his participation in Israel's redemption out of Egypt, and of that birth and formation of the people. It is apparent the case was thus. It cannot be otherwise. It is evident that the new creation, regeneration, calling, and justification, are personal things, because they are by personal influences; influences

of God's spirit on particular persons, and personal qualifications.

§ 30. It will follow from Taylor's scheme, that Simon the sorcerer had an interest in all the antecedent blessings. Yet the apostle tells him he was at that time in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. If he was really justified, washed, cleansed, sanctified; how was he at that time in the bond of iniquity? Justification, forgiveness, &c. is a release from the bond of iniquity. If the heart be purified by faith, it does not remain in the gall of bitterness.

§ 31. Saving grace differs from common grace, in nature and kind. To suppose only a gradual difference, would not only be to suppose, that some in a state of damnation are, within an infinitely little as good as some in a state of salvation, (which greatly disagrees with the Arminian notion of men's being saved by their own virtue and goodness); but this, taken with the Arminian notion of men's falling from grace, will naturally lead us to determine, that many that are once in a state of salvation, may be in such a state, and out of it, scores of times in a very short space. For though a person is in a state of salvation, he may be but just in it, and may be infinitely near the limits between a state of salvation and damnation; and as the habits of grace are, according to that scheme, only contracted and raised by consideration and exercise, and the exertion of the strength of the mind, and are lost when a man falls from grace by the intermission or cessation of these, and by contrary acts and exercises; and as the habits and principles of virtue are raised and sunk, brought into being and abolished by those things, and both their degree and their being wholly depend on them; the consequence will naturally be, that when a man is first raised to that degree of a virtuous disposition, as to be in a state of salvation, and the degree of virtue is almost infinitely near the dividing line, it will naturally be liable to be a little raised or sunk every hour, according as the thoughts and exercises of the mind are; as the mercury in the thermometer or barometer is never perfectly at rest, but is always rising or subsiding, according to the weight of the atmosphere, or the degree of heat.

§ 32. The dispute about grace's being resistible or irresistible, is perfect nonsense. For if the effect of grace is upon

the *will*, that it is nonsense ; except it be proper to say that a man with his will can resist his own will, or except it be possible for him to desire to resist his own will ; that is, except it be possible for a man to will a thing and not will it at the same time, and so far as he does will it. Or if you speak of enlightening grace, and say this grace is upon the understanding ; it is nothing but the same nonsense in other words. For then the sense runs thus, that a man, after he has seen so plainly that a thing is best for him that he wills it, yet he can at the same time nill it. If you say he can will any thing he pleases, this is most certainly true ; for who can deny, that a man can will any thing he doth already will ? And so with the same reason we may say, there is another will to please ; to please to will ; and so on to a thousand. Wherefore, to say that the man could have willed otherwise if he had pleased, is just all one as to say, that if he had willed otherwise, then we might be sure he could will otherwise.

§ 33. Those that deny infusion of grace by the Holy Spirit, must, of necessity, deny the Spirit to do any thing at all. By the Spirit's infusing, let be meant what it will, those who say there is no infusion, contradict themselves. For they say the Spirit doth something in the soul ; that is, he causeth some motion, or affection, or apprehension to arise in the soul, that, at the same time, would not be there without him. Now, God's Spirit doeth what he doeth ; he doth as much as he causeth ; or he causeth in the soul as much as he causeth, let that be how little soever. So much as is purely the effect of his immediate motion, that is the effect of his immediate motion, let that be what it will ; and so much is infused, how little soever that be. This is self-evident. For, suppose the Spirit of God only to assist the natural powers, then there is something done betwixt them. Men's own powers do something, and God's Spirit doth something ; only they work together. Now, that part which the Spirit doth, how little soever it be, is infused. So that they who deny infused habits, own that part of the habit is infused. For they say, the Holy Spirit assists the man in acquiring the habit ; so that it is acquired rather sooner than it would be otherwise. So that part of the habit is owing to the Spirit ; some of the strength of the habit was infused, and another part is owing to the natural powers of the man. Or if you say, that it is all owing to the natural power assisted ; how do you mean assisted ? To act more lively and vigorously than otherwise ? Then that liveliness and vigorousness must

be infused ; which is a habit, and therefore an infused habit. It is grace, and therefore infused grace. Grace consists very much in a principle that causes vigorousness and activity in action.

§ 34. Concerning what the Arminians say, that these are speculative points : I answer, all devotion greatly depends on a sense and acknowledgment of our dependence on God. But this is one of the very chief things belonging to our dependence on God : how much stress do the Scriptures lay on our dependence on God ! All assistance of the Spirit of God whatsoever, that is by any present influence or effect of the Spirit ; any thing at all that a person converted from sin to God is the subject of, through any immediate influence of the Spirit of God upon him, or any thing done by the Spirit, since the completing and confirming the Canon of the Scriptures, must be done by a physical operation either on the soul or body. The Holy Spirit of God does something to promote virtue in men's hearts, and to make them good, *beyond* what the angels can do. But the angels can present motives ; can excite ideas of the words of promises and threatenings, &c. and can persuade in this way by moral means ; as is evident, because the devils in this way promote vice.

§ 35. There is no objection made to God's producing any effects, or causing any events, by any immediate interposition, producing effects arbitrarily, or by the immediate efforts of his will, but what lies equally against his ordering it so, that any effects should be produced by the immediate interposition of men's will, to produce effects otherwise than the established laws of nature would have produced without men's arbitrary interposition. Such arguments as are founded on the established laws of nature, if they are valid against any interposition at all, will prevail against all interposition of God or man, and against the interposition of God ever to bring the world to an end, or amend it ; and prove that all shall be according to general laws. And they might as well argue, that the making of the world too was by general laws. If it be said, that it is of great importance and absolute necessity, that God should at last interpose and rectify the course of nature : I answer, this is yielding the point, that, in cases of great importance, it is reasonable to suppose there may be an interposition that may be arbitrary, and not by general laws.

§ 36. The nature of virtue being a positive thing, can proceed from nothing but God's immediate influence, and must take its rise from creation or infusion by God. For it must be either from that, or from our own choice and production, either at once, or gradually, by diligent culture. But it cannot begin, or take its rise from the latter, viz. our choice, or voluntary diligence. For if there exist nothing at all of the nature of virtue before, it cannot come from cultivation; for by the supposition there is nothing of the nature of virtue to cultivate, it cannot be by repeated and multiplied acts of virtuous choice, till it becomes an habit. For there can be no one virtuous choice, unless God immediately gives it. The first virtuous choice, or a disposition to it, must be immediately given, or it must proceed from a preceding choice. If the first virtuous act of will or choice be from a preceding act of will or choice, that preceding act of choice must be a virtuous act of choice, which is contrary to the supposition. For then there would be a preceding act of choice before the first virtuous act of choice. And if it be said the first virtuous act of choice is from a preceding act of will, which is not virtuous, this is absurd. For an act of will not virtuous, cannot produce another act of will of a nature entirely above itself, having something positive in it, any more than motion can produce thought or understanding; or the collision of two bodies can produce thought; or stones and lead can produce a spirit; or nothing can produce something.

§ 37. As to man's inability to convert himself.—In them that are totally corrupt, there can be no tendency towards their making their hearts better, till they begin to repent of the badness of their hearts. For if they do not repent, they still approve of it; and that tends to maintain their badness, and confirm it. But they cannot begin sincerely to repent of the badness of their hearts, till their hearts begin to be better; for repentance consists in a change of the mind and heart. So that it is not men's repentance that first gives rise to their having a better heart; and therefore it cannot be any tendency in them to make their hearts better. The heart can have no tendency to make itself better, till it begins to have a better tendency; for therein consists its badness, viz. its having no good tendency or inclination. And to begin to have a good tendency, or, which is the same thing, a tendency and inclination to be better, is the same thing as to begin already to be better. And therefore the heart's inclination to be good,

cannot be the thing that first gives rise to its being made good. For its inclination to be better, is the same thing with its becoming better. If there be any immediate influence or action of the Spirit of God at all on any created beings, in any part of the universe, since the days of the apostles, it is physical. If it be in exciting ideas of motives, or in any respect assisting or promoting any effect, still it is physical; and every whit as much so, as if we suppose the temper and nature of the heart is immediately changed. And it is as near akin to a miracle. If the latter be miraculous, so is the former.

§ 38. Whoever supposed, that the term *irresistible* was properly used with respect to that power by which an infant is brought into being; meaning, irresistible by the infant? Or whoever speaks of a man's walking out of a sound sleep *irresistibly*; meaning, that he cannot resist awaking? Or who says, that Adam was formed out of the dust of the earth irresistibly? See what I have said of the use of such terms as *irresistible*, *unfrustrable*, &c. in my inquiry about liberty.—The opponents of efficacious grace and physical operation, may be challenged to show that it is possible that any creature should become righteous without a physical operation, either a being created with the habit of righteousness, or its being immediately infused. See what I have written in my book of *original sin*, in those sections wherein I vindicate the doctrine of original righteousness, and argue, that if Adam was not created righteous, no way can be invented, how he could ever become righteous.

§ 39. Reason shows, that the first existence of a principle of virtue cannot be from man himself, nor in any created being whatsoever; but must be immediately given from God; or that otherwise it never can be obtained, whatever this principle be, whether love to God, or love to men. It must either be from God, or be an habit contracted by repeated acts. But it is most absurd to suppose, that the first existence of the principle of holy action, should be preceded by a course of holy actions. Because there can be no holy action without a principle, or holy inclination. There can be no act done from love, that shall be the cause of first introducing the very existence of love.

§ 40. There are no sort of benefits that are so much the subject of the *promises* of scripture as the bestowment

of virtue, or benefits which imply it. How often is the faith of the Gentiles, or their coming into the Christian Church promised to Christ in the Old Testament; Isaiah xlix. 6. and many other places; and he has promised it to his church, chap. xlix. 18—21, and innumerable other places. See Rom. xv. 12, 13. What a promise have we, Isaiah lx. 21. "Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hand, that I may be glorified,"—compared with the next chapter, 3d verse, "That they may be called the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." See also verse 8th of the same chapter. Likewise chapter lx. 17, 18. "I will make thy officers peace, and thy exactors righteousness; violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy border, but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." Here it is promised, that the rulers shall be righteous; and then, in the 21st verse following, it is promised that the people shall be so. The change of men to be of a peaceable disposition is promised, as in places innumerable, so in Isaiah xi. 6—11. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid," &c. Isaiah lv. 5. "Behold thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee," Jer. iii. 15. "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." This implies a promise that there should be such pastors in being, and that they should be faithful to feed the people with knowledge and understanding. Jer. x. 23. "The way of man is not in himself." Stebbing owns, that on Arminian principles, conversion depending on the determination of free will, it is possible, in its own nature, that none should ever be converted, (p. 235.) Then all the promises of virtue, of the revival of religion, &c. are nothing. Jer. xxxi. 18. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned,"—compared with Jer. xvii. 14. "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for thou art my praise." Which shews the force and meaning of such a phraseology to be, that God alone can be the doer of it; and that if he undertakes it, it will be effectually done. Jer. xxxi. 32—35. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of

the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord): But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good. But I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." Jer. xxxiii. 8. "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me." Ezek. xi. 18—20. "And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof, and all the abomination thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Ezek. xxxvi. 25—33. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land which I gave your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God: and I will also save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the corn and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, and ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you; be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God, In the day that I shall have clean-

sed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded." And ver 36. the whole is concluded with "I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it." Zech. xii. 10. to the end: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced," &c.

§ 41. We are told, Job xxviii. 28. that "the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." The same is also abundantly declared in other places. But it is equally declared, that God is the author and giver of wisdom, and that he is the author wholly and only; which is denied of other things. It is also abundantly declared in this 28th chapter of Job, that it cannot be obtained of any creature by any means; and it is implied in the end of the chapter, that it is God that giveth wisdom, as is asserted Prov. ii. 6. "For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

§ 42. That expression, Rom. i. 7. and 1 Cor. i. 2. and elsewhere, *called to be saints*, implies, that God makes the distinction. Compare this with what Christ says, John x. 27. "My sheep hear my voice." Verse 16. "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold; them also must I bring; and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28. to the end; "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of, &c. That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus," &c. According to the Arminian scheme, it ought to have been; I have planted, and Apollos watered, and God hath planted and watered more especially. For we have done it only as his servants. But you yourselves have given the increase; the fruit has been left to your free will: Agreeably to what the Arminians insist on, in what they say upon the parable of the vineyard which God planted in a fruitful hill, &c. and looked that it should bring forth grapes, and says, what could I have done more unto my vineyard?

§ 43. *Sincerity* itself is spoken of as coming from God. Phil. i. 10. "That ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence in the day

of Christ." And elsewhere God is represented as "creating a clean heart, renewing a right spirit, giving an heart of flesh," &c. The apostle "gives thanks for the faith and love of the Colossians, their being delivered from the power of darkness, &c.; and prays that they may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and might, agreeable to their knowledge, being fruitful in every good work; and for their perseverance, and that they might be made meet for the reward of the saints." Col. i. 3, 4, 9—13. This argues all to flow from God as the giver. Their first faith, and their love that their faith was attended with, and their knowledge and spiritual wisdom and prudence, and walking worthy of the Lord, and universal obedience, and doing every good work, and increasing in grace, and being strengthened in it, and their perseverance and cheerfulness in their obedience, and being made meet for their reward, *all are from God*. They are from God as the determining cause; else, why does the apostle pray that God would bestow or effect these things, if they be not at his determination whether they shall have them or not? He speaks of God's glorious power as manifested in the bestowment of these things. Col. ii. 13. "And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him." 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that hath called you; who also will do it." 2 Thess. i. 3, 4. "We are bound to thank God always for you, because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we glory in you—for your faith and patience in all your persecutions and tribulations." Verses 11, 12. "Wherefore we pray always for you, that God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

§ 44. The apostle thanks God for his own *prayers*, and for those of others; 2 Tim. i. 3. If they were from God, then doubtless also our prayers for ourselves, our very prayers for the Spirit, are from him. The prophet ascribes persons' prayers to their having the spirit of grace and supplication.

True acceptable prayer is spoken of, Rom. viii. as being the language of the Spirit; not that I suppose the very words are indited, but the disposition is given. 2 Tim. i. 7. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind." Philem. iii. 4. "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and toward all saints." Heb. xiii. 20, 21. "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, and to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen." Jam. i. 16—18. "Do not err, my beloved brethren: Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." The scope of the apostle, and the connexion of his discourse, plainly shows, that the apostle means to assert, that all moral good is from God. In the preceding verses, he was warning those he wrote to, not to lay their sins, or pride, or lusts, to the charge of God; and on that occasion he would have them be sensible, that every good gift is from God, and no evil; that God is the Father of *light*, and only of light; and that no darkness is from him, because there is no darkness in him; no change from light to darkness: no, not the least shadow. But if all moral good is from God, cometh down from him, and is his gift; then the very first good determination of the will, and every good improvement of assistance, is so.

§ 45. Philip. ii. 13. "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The plain meaning of this text is, that it is God by his operation and efficiency who gives the will, and also enables us to put that will in execution; or that he by his efficiency gives both the will and the deed. And this will remain the indisputable meaning of the text, notwithstanding criticism on the word *ενεργειαν*, &c. I question whether any word can be found, in all the Greek language, more expressive and significant of an effectual operation. Wherever the words effectual and effectually are used in our translation of the Bible, this is the word used in the original.

§ 46. By the disposing or determining cause of a benefit I mean, a cause that disposes, orders or determines, whether we shall be actually possessed of the benefit or not; and the same cause may be said to be an efficacious or effectual cause. That cause only can be said to be an efficacious cause, whose efficiency determines, reaches, and produces the effect. A being may be the determiner and disposer of an event, and not properly an efficient or efficacious cause. Because though he determines the futurity of the event, yet there is no positive efficiency or power of the cause that reaches and produces the effect; but merely a withholding of efficiency or power.

Concerning the giver's being a disposer or determiner, let us consider that objection, that when a man gives to a beggar, he does but offer, and leaves it with the determination of the beggar's will, whether he will be possessed of the thing offered. In answer to this, I observe, that in the instance before us, the very thing given is virtue, and this consists in the determination of the inclination and will. Therefore the determination of the will is the gift of God; otherwise virtue is not his gift, and why should we pray to God to give us such a determination of will, when that proceeds not from him but ourselves?

§ 47. Arminians make a great ado about the phrase *irresistible grace*. But the grand point of controversy really is, what is it that determines, disposes and decides the matter, whether there shall be saving virtue in the heart or not; and much more properly, whether the grace of God in the affair be *determining* grace, than whether it be *irresistible*. Our case is indeed extremely unhappy, if we have such a book to be our grand and only rule, our light and directory, that is so exceeding perplexed, dark, paradoxical and hidden every where in the manner of expression, as the scriptures must be, to make them consistent with Arminian opinions; by whatever means this has come to pass, whether through the distance of ages, diversity of customs, or by any other cause. It is to be considered that this is given for the rule of all ages; and not only of the most learned and accurate and penetrating critics, and men of vast inquiry and skill in antiquity, but for all sorts of persons, of every age and nation, learned and unlearned. If this be true, how unequal and unfit is the provision that is made! How improper to answer the end designed! If men will take subterfuge in pretences of a vast alteration of

phrase, through diversity of ages and nations, what may not men hide themselves from under such a pretence! No words will hold and secure them. It is not in the nature of words to do it. At this rate, language in its nature has no sufficiency to communicate ideas.

§ 48. In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do *some*, and we do the *rest*. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz. our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain: we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive, and wholly active.—In the scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert, and men are said to convert and turn. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart. God circumcises the heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts; not merely because we must use the means in order to the effect, but the effect itself is our act and our duty. These things are agreeable to that text, “God worketh in you both to will and to do.”

§ 49. When Christ says, John x. “Other sheep have I which are not of this fold;” it is unreasonable to suppose he meant all in the world, that were then of a *teachable* disposition. Many of them would be dead before the gospel could be spread among the Gentiles; and many of the Gentiles were doubtless brought in, that at that time were not of a teachable disposition. And unless God’s decrees and efficacious grace made a difference, it is unreasonable to suppose any other, than that multitudes in countries where the apostles never preached, were as teachable as in those countries where they did go, and so they never were brought in according to the words of Christ, “Those whom the Father hath given me, shall come unto me.” Christ speaks of the Father’s giving them as a thing past; John x. 29. “My Father which gave them me.” When Christ speaks of men being drawn to him, he does not mean any preparation of disposition antecedent to their having the gospel, but a being converted to Christ by faith in the gospel revealing Christ crucified, as appears by John xii. 32. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”—The apostle says, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Therefore it is impossible that persons should have, before faith, those

virtues, that are peculiarly amiable to God, as Stebbing supposes.

§ 50. The apostle James tell us, that if we do not pray in *faith*, we have no reason to expect to receive any thing, and particularly not to receive divine wisdom. And therefore, it is unreasonable to suppose with Stebbing, that persons first pray, even before they have a spirit of meekness, and teachableness, and humility, faith or repentance, and that God has promised to answer these prayers. Christian virtues being every where spoken of as the special effect of grace, and often called by the name of grace, by reason of its being the peculiar fruit of grace, does not well consist with the Arminian notion of assistance, viz. that God is obliged to give us assistance sufficient for salvation from hell, because, forsooth, it is not just to damn us for the want of that which we have not sufficient means to escape; and then, after God, has given these sufficient means, our improving them well is wholly from ourselves, our own will, and not from God; and the thing wherein Christian virtue consists, is wholly and entirely ourselves.

§ 51. I would ask, how it is possible for us to come by virtue at first, according to Arminian principles; or how we come by our first virtue. Is it natural? Is there some virtuous disposition with which we come into the world? But how is this virtue? That which men bring into the world is necessary, and what men had no opportunity to prevent, and it is not at all from our free will. How then can there be any virtue in it according to their principles? Or is our first virtue wholly from the influence of the Spirit of God without any endeavour or effort of ours, to be partly the cause of it? This to be sure cannot be, by their principles; for according to them, that which is not at all from us, or that we are not the causes of, is no virtue of ours. Is it wholly from our endeavours without any assistance at all of the Spirit? This is contrary to what they pretend to hold; for they assert, that without divine assistance there can be no virtue.—*Stebbing*, pages 27, 28, and pages 20, 21, and other places. If they say it is partly from the influence of the Spirit of God, and partly from our own endeavours, I would inquire, whether those endeavours that our first virtue partly arises from, be good endeavours, and at all virtuous? If the answer be in the affirmative, this contradicts the supposition. For I am now

inquiring what the *first* virtue is. The first virtue we have, certainly does not arise from virtuous endeavours preceding that first virtue. For that is to suppose virtue before the first virtue. If the answer be, that they are no good endeavours, they have nothing at all of the nature of the exercise of any good disposition, or any good aim and intention, or any virtuous sincerity; I ask, what tendency can such efforts of the mind, as are wholly empty of all goodness, have to produce true moral goodness in the heart?

Can an action, that in principles and ends has no degree of moral good, have a tendency to beget a habit of acting from good principles and for good ends? For instance, can a man's doing something purely to satisfy some sensitive appetite of his own, or to increase his own worldly profit, have any kind of tendency to beget a habit of doing something from true disinterested benevolence, or to excite to any act from such a principle? Certainly an act perfectly void of benevolence, has no more tendency to produce either an habit or act of benevolence, than nothing has a tendency to produce something.

§ 52. Stebbing supposes the assistance God gives, or the operation of the Spirit in order to faith, is to give a good and honest heart, prepared to receive and well improve the word; as particularly, meekness, humility, teachableness, &c. And supposes that these effects of the Spirit are to be obtained by prayer; but yet allows, that the prayer must be acceptably made, page 106. which supposes that some degree of virtue must be exercised in prayer. And it may be presumed that they will allow, that there are multitudes of men, who at present are so wicked, so destitute of virtue, that they have not virtue enough for acceptable prayer to God. They have not now so much respect to God or their own souls, as to incline them to pray at all. Now, I would inquire, how these men shall come by virtue, in order to acceptably praying to God? Or how is it within their reach by virtue of God's promises? Or how can they come by it, save by God's sovereign arbitrary grace? Shall they pray to God for it, and so obtain it? But this is contrary to the supposition. For it is supposed, that they now have not virtue enough to pray acceptably, and this is the very thing inquired, how they come by the virtue necessary in order to their making acceptable prayer? Or shall they work the virtue in themselves wholly without God's assistance? But this is contrary to what they pretend, viz. that all virtue is

from God, or by the grace and assistance of God, which they allow to be evident by that scripture, "*without me ye can do nothing.*" Or, is God obliged to give it, or to assist them to obtain it, without their praying for it, or having virtue enough to ask it of him? That they do not pretend. For they suppose the condition of our obtaining the heavenly Spirit is our seeking, asking, &c. ; and besides, if God gives it without their first seeking it, that will make God the first determining efficient, yea, the mere and sole author of it, without their doing any thing toward it, without their so much as seeking or asking for it ; which would be entirely to overthrow their whole scheme, and would by their principles, make this virtue no virtue at all, because not at all owing to them, or any endeavours of theirs.

§ 53. If they reply, they must in the first place *consider* : they are capable of consideration ; and if they would consider as they ought and may, they would doubtless pray to God, and ask his help ; and every man naturally has some virtue in him, which proper consideration would put into exercise so far as to cause him to pray in some measure acceptably, without any new gift from God :—I answer, this is inconsistent with many of their principles. It is so, that men should naturally have some virtue in them. For what is natural is necessary ; is not from themselves and their own endeavours and free acts ; but prevents them all, and therefore cannot be their virtue. If they say, consideration will not stir up any virtue that is naturally in them, to cause them to pray virtuously ; but God has obliged himself to give virtue enough to enable them to pray and seek acceptably, if they will consider : I answer, this is more than they pretend. If they say, serious consideration itself is some degree of seeking their own good, and there is an implicit prayer in it to the supreme Being to guide them into the way to their happiness : I answer, if it be supposed that there is an implicit prayer in their consideration, still they allow that prayer must be in some measure acceptable prayer, in order to its being entitled to an answer ; and consequently must have some degree of virtuous respect to God, &c. ; and if so, then the same question returns with all the aforementioned difficulties over again, viz. How came the profane, thoughtless, vain, inconsiderate person by this new virtue, this new respect to God, that he ever exercises in this serious consideration and implicit prayer ?

If they say, there is no necessity of supposing any im-

PLICIT prayer in the first consideration; and yet, if the wicked, profane, careless person, makes a good improvement of what grace he has, in proper consideration or otherwise, God has obliged himself to give him more, in that general promise, "to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance:" Then I answer, here is new virtue in his making a good improvement of what common assistance he has, which before he neglected, and made no good improvement of. This is contrary to what they pretend. Or is God obliged to give new assistance in order to this new virtue by any promise? If he be, what is the condition of the promise? It is absurd to say, making a good improvement of what assistance they have; for that is the thing we are inquiring after, viz. How comes he by that new virtue, making a good improvement of what he has, when before he had not virtue enough to make such an improvement? Of whatever kind this assistance is, whether it be some afflictive dispensation of providence, or some other outward dispensation or inward influence, the difficulty is the same. How becomes God obliged to give this assistance; and what is the condition of the promise?

The answer must be, that this new virtue is without any new assistance given, and is from God no otherwise than as the former neglected assistance or grace subserves it. But the question is, whence comes the virtue of not neglecting, but improving that former assistance? Is it proper to say that a man is assisted to improve assistance by the assistance improved? Suppose a number of men were in the water in danger of drowning, and a friend on shore throws out a cord amongst them, but all of them for a while neglect it; at length one of them takes hold of it, and makes improvement of it; and any should inquire, how that man came by the prudence and virtue of improving the cord, when others did not, and he before had neglected it; would it be a proper answer to say, that he that threw out the rope, assisted him wisely to improve the rope, by throwing out the rope to him? This would be an absurd answer. The question is not, how he came by his *opportunity*, but how he came by the *disposition* of improvement. His friend on shore gave him the opportunity, and this is all. The man's virtue in improving it was not at all from him. Would it not be exceedingly impertinent, in such a case, to set forth from time to time, how this man's discretion, and virtue and prudence, was the gift of his friend on the shore, his mere gift, the fruit of his purpose and mere good pleasure, and of his power; and yet that it was of his own will? Man's

virtue, according to Arminian principles, must consist wholly and entirely in improving assistance : For in that only consists the exercise of their free will in the affair, and not in their having the assistance, although their virtue must be by their principles entirely from themselves, and God has no hand in it. From the latter part of the above discourse, it appears that, according to Arminian principles, men's virtue is altogether of themselves, and God has no hand at all in it.

§ 54. When I say that the acts and influences of the Spirit determine the effects, it is not meant that man has nothing to do to determine in the affair. The soul of man undoubtedly, in every instance, does voluntarily determine with respect to his own consequent actions. But this voluntary determination of the soul of man, is the effect determined. This determining act of the soul is not denied, but supposed, as it is the effect we are speaking of, that the influence of God's Spirit determines. The scripture speaks of this as the reason that good men have virtue, *that God hath given it to them* ; and the reason why bad men have it not, *that God hath not given it to them*. These two together clearly prove that God is the determining or disposing cause of virtue or goodness in men.

§ 55. In many particulars their scheme contradicts common sense. It is contrary to common sense, that a being should continually meet with millions of millions of real proper disappointments and crosses to his proper desires, and not continually lead a distressed and unhappy life. It is contrary to common sense, that God should know that an event will certainly come to pass, whose non-existence he at the same time knows is not impossible. It is contrary to common sense that a thing should be the cause of itself ; and that a thing not necessary in its own nature should come to pass without any cause : That the more indifferent a man is in any moral action, the more virtuous he is, &c.

§ 56. They say, their scheme gives *almost all* the glory to God. That matter, I suppose, may easily be determined, and it may be made appear beyond all contest, how much they do ascribe to the man, and how much they do not. By them, salvation is so far from God, he gives *opportunity* to obtain salvation ; it is God that gives the offer and makes the promise :

but the obtaining the thing promised is of men. The being of the promise is of God ; but their interest in it is wholly of themselves, of their own free will. And furthermore, it is to be observed, that even God's making the offer, and giving the opportunity to obtain salvation, at least that which consists in salvation from eternal misery, is not of God, so as to be owing to any proper grace or goodness of his. For they suppose he was *obliged* to make the offer, and it would have been a reproach to his justice, if he had not given an opportunity to obtain salvation. For they hold it is unjust for God to make men miserable for Adam's sin ; and that it is unjust to punish them for a sin that they cannot avoid ; and that, therefore, it is unjust for God not to preserve or save all men that do what they can, or use their sincere endeavours to do their duty ; and therefore it certainly follows, that it is unjust in God not to give all opportunity to be saved or preserved from misery : and consequently, it is no fruit at all of any grace or kindness in him to give such opportunity, or to make the offer of it. So that, the fruit of God's kindness in man's salvation, is the positive happiness that belongs to salvation. For it is evident that a man's *making himself to differ* with regard to any great spiritual benefit, and his not receiving it from another, but from himself, is ground of a man's boasting and glorying in himself, with respect to that benefit. "Who maketh thee to differ ? why boastest thou, as though thou hadst not received it ?"

§ 57. It is evident, that it is God's design to *exclude man's boasting* in the affair of his salvation. Now let us consider what does give *ground* for boasting in the apostle's account, and what it is that in his account *excludes* boasting, or cuts off occasion for it. It is evident by what the apostle says, 1 Cor. i. latter end, that the entireness and universality of our dependence on God, is that which cuts off occasion of boasting ; as, our receiving our wisdom, our holiness, and redemption through Christ, and not through ourselves ; that Christ is made to us wisdom, justification, holiness and redemption : and not on'y so, but that it is of God that we have any part in Christ ; *of him are ye in Christ Jesus* : nay, further, that it is from God we receive those benefits of wisdom, holiness, &c. through the Saviour. The import of all these things, if we may trust to Scripture representations, is, that God has contrived to exclude our glorying ; that we should be wholly and every way dependent on God, for the moral and natural good

that belongs to salvation ; and that we have all from the hand of God, by his power and grace. And certainly this is wholly inconsistent with the idea that our holiness is wholly from ourselves ; and, that we are interested in the benefits of Christ rather than others, is wholly of our own decision. And that such an universal dependence is what takes away occasion of taking glory to ourselves, and is a proper ground of an ascription of all the glory of the things belonging to man's salvation to God, is manifest from Rom. xi. 35, 36. "Or who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed to him again ? For of him, and to him, and through him, are all things ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

§ 58. Again, in the apostle's account, a benefit being of *our works*, gives occasion for boasting, and therefore God has contrived that our salvation shall not be of our works, but of mere grace ; Rom. iii. 27. Eph. ii. 9. And that neither the salvation, nor the condition of it shall be of our works, but that, with regard to all, we are *God's workmanship*, his *creation*, antecedently to our works ; and his grace and power in producing this workmanship, and his determination or purpose with regard to them, are all prior to our works, and the cause of them. See also Rom. xi. 4—6. And it is evident, that man's having virtue from himself, and not receiving it from another, and making himself to differ with regard to great spiritual benefits, does give ground for boasting, by the words of the apostle in Rom. iii. 27. And this is allowed by all as to spiritual gifts. And if so in them, more so in greater things ; more so in that which in itself is a thousand times more excellent, and of ten thousand times greater importance and benefit.

By the Arminian scheme, that which is the most excellent thing, viz. virtue and holiness, which the apostle sets forth as being infinitely the most honourable, and will bring the subjects of it to the greatest and highest honour, that which is the highest dignity of man's nature of all things that belong to man's salvation ; in comparison of which, all things belonging to that salvation are nothing ; that which does more than any thing else constitute the difference between them and others, as more excellent, more worthy, more honourable and happy : this is from themselves ! With regard to this, they have not received it of another. With regard to this great thing, they, and they only, make themselves to differ

from others; and this difference proceeds not at all from the power or grace of God."

§ 59. Virtue is not only the most honourable attainment, but it is that which men, on the supposition of their being possessed of it, are more apt to glory in, than in any thing else whatsoever. For what are men so apt to glory in as their own supposed excellency, as in their supposed virtue? And what sort of glorying is that, which, it is evident in fact, the Scriptures do chiefly guard against? It is glorying in their own righteousness, their own holiness, their own good works. It is manifest, that in the apostle's account, it is a proper consideration to prevent our boasting, that our distinction from others is not of ourselves, not only in being distinguished by better gifts and better principles, but in our being made partakers of the great privileges of Christians, such as being ingrafted into Christ, and partaking of the fatness of that olive tree. Rom. xi. 17, 18. "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches."

Here it is manifest, that the distinction between some and others, is the thing insisted on; and the apostle, verse 22, calls upon them to consider this great distinction, and to ascribe it only to the distinguishing goodness of God. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness." And its being owing not to them, but to God and his distinguishing goodness, is the thing the apostle urges as a reason why they should not boast, but magnify God's grace or distinguishing goodness. And if it be a good reason, and the scheme of our salvation be every way so contrived (as the apostle elsewhere signifies) that all occasion of boasting should be precluded, and all reasons given to ascribe all to God's grace; then it is doubtless so ordered, that the greatest privileges, excellency, honour and happiness of Christians, should be that wherein they do not distinguish themselves, but the difference is owing to God's distinguishing goodness.—Yet, Stebbing strongly asserts, God is not the author of that difference that is between some and others, that some are good, and others bad! The Arminians differ among themselves. Dr. Whitby supposes that what God does, is only proposing moral motives; but that in attending, adverting and considering, we exercise our liberty. But Stebbing supposes, that

the attention and consideration is itself owing to the Spirit of God; (page 217) and then changes the question (pages 223,) 224) he was considering, who has the chief glory of our conversion, or of our virtue? and endeavours to prove the affirmative of *another* question, viz. whether God is the author of that pardon and salvation, of which conversion and virtue are the condition? He supposes, that one thing wherein the assistance of the Spirit consists, is the giving of a meek, teachable, disinterested *temper* of mind, to prepare men for faith in Christ; (pages 217, 259) and that herein consists the drawing of the Father, John vi. 44. viz. in giving such a temper of mind—This he calls the preventing grace of God, that goes before conversion. He often speaks of a part that we do, and a part that God does. And he speaks of this as that part which God does. Therefore this, in distinction from the part which we do, (for so he speaks of it), is wholly done by God. And consequently, here is virtue wholly from God, and not at all from the exercise of our own free will: which is inconsistent with his own, and all other Arminian principles.

§ 60. The Arminian scheme naturally, and by necessary consequence, leads men to take all the glory of all spiritual good (which is immensely the chief, most important and excellent thing in the whole creation) to ourselves; as much as if we, with regard to those effects, were the supreme, the self-existent and independent, and absolutely sovereign disposers. We leave the glory of only the meaner part of creation to God, and take to ourselves all the glory of that which is properly the life, beauty and glory of the creation, and without which it is all worse than nothing. So that there is nothing left for the great First and Last; no glory for either the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, in the affair. This is not carrying things too far, but is a consequence truly and certainly to be ascribed to their scheme of things. He may be said to be the *giver* of money that *offers* it to us, without being the proper determiner of our acceptance. But it is in the *acceptance* of offers, and the proper improvement of opportunities, wherein consists virtue. He may be said to be the giver of money or goods that does not determine the wise choice; but if the wise and good choice itself be said to be the thing given, it supposes that the giver determines the existence of such a wise choice. But now, this is the thing of which God is represented as the giver, when he is spoken of as the giver of virtue, holiness, &c.; for virtue and holiness.

(as all our opponents in these controversies allow and maintain) is the thing wherein a wise and good choice consists.

§ 61. It is the common way of the Arminians, in their discourses and doctrines, which they pretend are so much more consistent with reason and common sense, than the doctrines of the Calvinists, to give no account at all, and make no proper answer to the inquiries made; and they do as Mr. Locke says of the Indian philosopher, who, when asked what the world stood upon, answered, it stood upon an elephant; and when asked, what the elephant stood upon, he replied, on a broad-backed turtle, &c. None of their accounts will bear to be traced; the first link of the chain, and the fountain of the whole stream, must not be inquired after. If it be, it brings all to a gross absurdity and self-contradiction. And yet, when they have done, they look upon others as stupid bigots, and void of common sense, or at least going directly counter to common sense, and worthy of contempt and indignation, because they will not agree with them. I suppose it will not be denied by any party of Christians, that the happiness of the saints in the other world consists much in perfect holiness and the exalted exercises of it; that the souls of the saints shall enter upon it at once at death; or (if any deny that) at least at the resurrection; that the saint is made perfectly holy as soon as ever he enters into heaven. I suppose none will say, that perfection is obtained by repeated acts of holiness; but all will grant, that it is wrought in the saint immediately by the power of God; and yet that it is virtue notwithstanding. And why are not the beginnings of holiness wrought in the same manner? Why should not the beginnings of an holy nature be wrought immediately by God in a soul that is wholly of a contrary nature, as well as holiness be perfected in a soul that has already a prevailing holiness? And if it be so, why is not the beginning, thus wrought, as much virtue as the perfection thus wrought?

§ 62. Saving grace differs not only in *degree*, but in *nature* and kind, from common grace, or any thing that is ever found in natural men. This seems evident, because conversion is a work that is done at once, and not gradually. If saving grace differed only in degree from what went before, then the making a man a good man would be a gradual work; it would be the increasing of the grace that he has, till it comes to such a degree as to be saving, at least it would be

frequently so. But that the conversion of the heart is not a work thus gradually wrought, but at once, appears by Christ's converting the soul being represented as his *calling* of it; Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the *called* according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son: that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also *called*; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Heb. ix. 15. "That they which are *called* might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God, your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that *calleth* you, who also will do it." Nothing else can be meant in these places by *calling*, but what Christ does in a sinner's saving conversion; by which it seems evident, that this is done at once, and not gradually. Hereby Christ shows his great power. He does but speak the powerful word, and it is done. He does but call, and the heart of the sinner immediately cometh, as was represented by his calling his disciples, and their immediately following him. So, when he called Peter and Andrew, James and John, they were minding other things, and had no thought of following Christ. There is something immediately put into their hearts, at that call, which makes them so immediately act in a manner altogether new, and so alien from what they were before.

§ 63. That the work of conversion is wrought at once, is further evident, by its being compared to a work of *creation*. When God created the world, he did what he did immediately; he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. He said, Let there be light, and there was light. Also by its being compared to a raising from the dead. Raising from the dead is not a gradual work, but it is done at once. God calls, and the dead come forth immediately. When God creates, he does not merely establish and perfect the things that were made before, but makes them wholly and immediately. The things that are seen, are not made of things that do appear. Saving grace in the heart is said to be the new man, a new creature; and corruption the old man. If virtue in the heart of a holy man, be not different in its nature and

kind, then the man might possibly have had the same seventy years before, and from the beginning of his life, and has it no otherwise now, but only in a greater degree : and how then is he a new creature ?

§ 64. Again, it is evident also from its being compared to a *resurrection*. Natural men are said to be dead : But when they are converted, they are by God's mighty and effectual power raised from the dead. Now, there is no medium between being dead and alive. He that is dead, has no degree of life. He that has the least degree of life in him, is alive. When a man is raised from the dead, life is not only in a greater degree, but it is all new. And this is further evident by that representation that is made of Christ's converting sinners, in John v. 25. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live." This shews conversion to be an immediate and instantaneous work, like to the change made in Lazarus when Christ called him from the grave : there went life with the call, and Lazarus was immediately alive. That before the call they are dead, and therefore wholly destitute of any life, is evident by that expression, "the dead shall hear the voice ;" and immediately after the call, they are alive ; yea, there goes life with the voice, as is evident not only because it is said they shall live, but also because it is said, they shall hear his voice. It is evident, that the first moment they have any life, is the moment when Christ calls ; and when Christ calls, or as soon as they are called, they are converted ; as is evident from what is said in the first argument, wherein it is shewn, that to be called, and converted, is the same thing.

§ 65. A wicked man has not that principle of nature which a godly man has, as is evident by 1 John iii. 9. "Who-soever is born of God doth not commit sin : for his *seed* remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The natural import of the metaphor shows, that by seed, is meant a principle of action : it may be small as a grain of mustard seed. A seed is a small thing : it may be buried up and lie hid, as the seed sown in the earth : it may seem to be dead, as seeds for a while do, till quickened by the sun and rain. But any degree of such a principle, or principle of such a nature, is what is called the seed : it need not be to such a degree, or have such a prevalency, in order to be called

a seed. And it is further evident that this seed, or this inward principle of nature, is peculiar to the saints : for he that has it, cannot sin ; and therefore he that sins, or is a wicked man, has it not.

§ 66. Natural men, or those that are not savingly converted, have no degree of that principle from whence all gracious actings flow, viz. the Spirit of God or of Christ ; as is evident, because it is asserted both ways in Scripture, that those who have not the Spirit of Christ, are not his, Rom. viii. 9. ; and also, that those who have the Spirit of Christ, are his ; 1 John iii. 24. “ Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” And the Spirit of God is called the earnest of the future inheritance, 2 Cor. i. 22. and v. 5. ; Eph. i. 14. Yea, that a natural man has nothing of the Spirit in him, no part nor portion in it, is still more evident, because *having of the Spirit* is given as a sure sign of being in Christ. 1 John iv. 13. “ Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” By which it is evident, that they have none of that holy principle, that the godly have. And if they have nothing of the Spirit, they have nothing of those things that are the fruits of the Spirit, such as those mentioned in Gal. v. 22. “ But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” These fruits are here mentioned with the very design, that we may know whether we have the Spirit or no. In the 18th verse, the apostle tells the Galatians, that if they are led by the Spirit, they are not under the law ; and then directly proceeds, first, to mention what are the fruits or works of the *flesh*, and then, what are the fruits of the *Spirit*, that we may judge whether we are led by the Spirit.

§ 67. That natural men, or those that are not born again, have nothing of that grace that is in godly men, is evident by John iii. 6. ; where Christ, speaking of regeneration, says, “ That which is born of the flesh, is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.” By flesh is here meant nature, and by Spirit is meant grace, as is evident by Gal. v. 16, 17. ; Gal. vi. 8. ; 1 Cor. iii. 1. That is Christ’s very argument : by this it is that Christ in those words would show Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration, that by the first birth we have nothing but nature, and can have nothing else without being

born again ; by which it is exceeding evident, that they who are not born again, have nothing else. And that natural men have not the Spirit is evident, since by this text with the context it is most evident, that those who have the Spirit, have it by regeneration. It is born in them ; it comes into them no otherwise than by birth, and that birth is in regeneration, as is most evident by the preceding and following verses. In godly men there are two opposite principles : the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh ; as Gal. v. 25. But it is not so with natural men. Rebekah in having Esau and Jacob struggle together in her womb, was a type only of the true *Church*.

§ 68. Natural men have nothing of that nature in them which true Christians have ; and that appears, because the nature they have is divine nature. The saints alone have it. Not only they alone partake of such degrees of it, but they alone are *partakers* of it. To be a partaker of the divine nature is mentioned as peculiar to the saints, 2 Pet. i. 4. The words in this verse and the foregoing, run thus : “According to his divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue ; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature ; having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Divine nature and lust are evidently here spoken of as two opposite principles in men. Those that are of the world, have only the latter principle. But to be partakers of the divine nature, is spoken of as peculiar to them that are distinguished and separated from the world, by the free and sovereign grace of God giving them all things that pertain to life and godliness ; by giving the knowledge of Christ, and calling them to glory and virtue ; and giving them the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, and enabling them to escape the corruption of the world of wicked men. It is spoken of not only as peculiar to the saints, but as the highest privilege of saints.

§ 69. A natural man has no degree of that relish and sense of spiritual things, or things of the Spirit, and of their divine truth and excellency, which a godly man has ; as is evident by 1 Cor. ii. 14. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto

him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Here a natural man is represented as perfectly destitute of any sense, perception, or discerning of those things. For, by the words, he neither does nor can know, or discern them. So far from it, that they are foolishness unto him. He is such a stranger to them, that he knows not what the talk of such things means; they are words without a meaning to him; he knows nothing of the matter, any more than a blind man of colours. Hence it will follow, that the sense of religion which a natural man has, is not only not to the same degree, but is not of the same nature with what a godly man has. Besides, if a natural person has that fruit of the Spirit, which is of the same kind with what a spiritual person has, then he experiences within himself the things of the Spirit of God. How then can he be said to be such a stranger to them, and have no perception or discerning of them? The reason why natural men have no knowledge of spiritual things, is, that they have nothing of the Spirit of God dwelling in them. This is evident by the context. For there we are told it is by the Spirit these things are taught, verse 10—12. Godly persons, in the text we are upon, are called spiritual, evidently on this account, that they *have* the Spirit: and unregenerate men are called natural men, because they have nothing but nature. For natural men are in no degree spiritual; they have only nature, and no spirit. If they had any thing of the Spirit, though not in so great a degree as the godly, yet they would be taught spiritual things, or the things of the Spirit in proportion; the Spirit, that searcheth all things, would teach them in some measure. There would not be so great a difference, that the one could perceive nothing of them, and that they should be foolishness to them, while, to the other, they appear divinely and unspeakably wise and excellent, as they are spoken of in the context, verses 6—9.; and as such, the apostle speaks here of *discerning* them. The reason why natural men have no knowledge or perception of spiritual things, is, that they have none of that anointing spoken of, 1 John ii. 27. "But the anointing, which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man should teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." This anointing is evidently here spoken of, as a thing peculiar to true saints. Sinners never had any of that oil poured upon them: and because ungodly men have none of it, therefore they have no discerning of spiritual things. If

they had any degree of it, they would discern in some measure. Therefore, none of that sense which natural men have of spiritual things, is of the same nature with what the godly have. And that natural men are wholly destitute of this knowledge, is further evident, because conversion is represented in Scripture by opening the eyes of the blind. But this would be very improperly so represented, if a man might have some sight, though not so clear and full, for scores of years before his conversion.

§ 70. That unbelievers have no degree of that grace that the saints have, is evident, because they have no communion with Christ. If unbelievers partook of any of that spirit, those holy inclinations, affections and actings that the godly have from the Spirit of Christ, then they would have communion with Christ. The communion of saints with Christ, certainly consists in receiving of his fulness, and partaking of his grace, John i. 16. "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." And the partaking of that Spirit which God gives not by measure unto him, the partaking of Christ's holiness and grace, his nature, inclinations, tendencies, affections, love, desires, must be a part of communion with him. Yea, a believer's communion with God and Christ, does mainly consist in partaking of the Holy Spirit, as is evident by 2 Cor. xiii. 14. But that unbelievers have no communion or fellowship with Christ, appears,

1. Because they are not *united* to Christ; they are not in Christ. Those that are not in Christ, or are not united to him, can have no degree of communion with him: for union with Christ, is the foundation of all communion with him. The union of the members with the head, is the foundation of all their communion or partaking with the head; and so the union of the branch with the vine, is the foundation of all the communion it has with the vine, of partaking in any degree of its sap or life, or influence. So the union of the wife to the husband, is the foundation of her communion in his goods. But no natural man is united to Christ; because all that are in Christ shall be saved; 1 Cor. xv. 22. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" *i. e.* all that are in Christ; for this speaks only of the glorious resurrection and eternal life. Phil. iii. 8, 9. "Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found *in*

him, not having on my own righteousness," &c. 2 Cor. v. 17. "Now, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." 1 John ii. 5. "Hereby know we that we are in him." Chap. iii. 24. "And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us," &c. and iv. 13. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us."

2. The Scripture more directly teaches, that only true saints have communion with Christ; 1 John i. 3—7. "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." And 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." By this it appears, that those who have fellowship with Christ, are those that cannot fall away, whom God's faithfulness is bound to confirm to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of Jesus Christ.

§ 71. Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones is an illustrative confirmation, that however natural men may be the subjects of great and wonderful influences and operations of God's great power and Spirit; yet they do not properly partake at all of the Spirit before conversion. In all that is wrought in them, in every respect fitting and preparing them for grace, so that nothing shall be wanting but divine life; yet as long as they are without this, they have nothing of the Spirit. Which confirms the distinctions I have elsewhere made, of the Spirit of God influencing the minds of natural men under common illuminations and convictions, and yet not communicating himself in his own proper nature to them, before conversion; and that saving grace differs from common grace, not only in degree, but also in nature and kind. It is said, Rev. iii. 8. of the church at Philadelphia, which is commended above all other churches, *Thou hast a little strength*; certainly implying, that ungodly men have none at all.

§ 72. That those that prove apostates, never had the same kind of faith with true saints, is confirmed by what Christ said of Judas, before his apostasy, John vi. 64. "But there are some of you, who believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him." By this it is evident, that Judas, who afterwards proved an apostate, (and is doubtless set forth as an example for all apostates), though he had a kind of faith in Christ, yet did not believe in Christ with a true faith, and was at that time, before his apostasy, destitute of that kind of faith which the true disciples had; and that he had all along, even from the beginning, been destitute of that faith. And by the 70, and 71, verses of the same chapter, it is evident, that he was not only destitute of that degree of goodness that the rest had, but totally destitute of Christian piety, and wholly under the dominion of wickedness; being in this respect like a devil, notwithstanding all his faith and temporary regard to Christ. "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. For he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."

§ 73. Why should we suppose that God would make any promises of spiritual and eternal blessings to that which has no goodness in it? Why should he promise that they shall obtain conversion, who do not do any thing right, or use any proper means in order to obtain it? For the proper means of obtaining grace is seeking it truly, with a love and appetite to it, and desire of it, and sense of its excellency and worthiness, and a seeking of it of God through Christ: and to such as seek it thus, God has faithfully promised he will bestow it.—But though there be no promise to any seekers of grace, but gracious ones; yet there must be a greater probability of their conversion who seek, though not after a gracious manner, and though they are not thoroughly and sufficiently resolved and sincere in their seeking, than of those who wholly neglect their salvation: there is not so great an unlikelihood of it. And therefore, if persons are out of the way of these means, there is no likelihood of their receiving grace. Because God bestows his grace by means; and so the more they are in the way of means, and the more they attend them, the more are they in the way of being met with by God, and receiving his grace, by those means.

§ 74. Indefinite promises, as they are called, seem to be no other than promises of the public covenant, or the promises made to a professing covenant people. God has promised to his visible church a blessing on his ordinances: and with respect to the public society, the visible church, to whom the promises are made, they are absolutely promised. But, not being limited to particular persons, to them they are no more than encouragements. Such promises as these, children are interested in by baptism. God has promised to bestow salvation on his church, and in the way of his appointed worship. "In all places where I record my name, there will I come unto thee, and will bless thee." When God set his tabernacle amongst his people, he annexed a promise of his blessing.

CHAP. V.

CONCERNING THE PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.

§ 1. **T**HERE is just the same reason for those commands of earnest care and laborious endeavours for perseverance, and threatenings of defection, notwithstanding its being certain that all that have true grace shall persevere, as there is for earnest endeavours after godliness, and to make our calling and election sure; notwithstanding all that are elected, shall undoubtedly be saved. ✓ For as the case with respect to this is the same, decree or no decree, every one that believes shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned. They that will not live godly lives, find out for themselves that they are not elected; they that will live godly lives, have found out for themselves that they are elected. So it is here: he that to his utmost endeavours to persevere in ways of obedience, finds out that his obedience and righteousness are true; and he that does not, discovers that his is false.

§ 2. As persons are commanded and counselled to repent and be converted, though it is already determined whether they shall be converted or no; after the same manner, and with the same propriety, persons are commanded and counselled to persevere, although by their being already converted, it is certain they shall persevere. By their resolutely and stedfastly persevering through all difficulties, opposition and trials, they obtain an evidence of the truth and soundness of their conversion; and by their unstableness and backsliding, they procure an evidence of their unsoundness and hypocrisy. And it always happens, that persons who have the most need of being cautioned and counselled against falling and apostasy, by reason of the weakness of their grace, have most need of an evidence of the truth of their grace. And those who have the least need of any evidence, by reason of the strength and lively exercise of grace, have least need of being warned against falling, they being least in danger of it. And so the same persons, when they are most in danger of falling,—by reason of the languishing of their graces, their ill-temper and workings of corruption—have *most* need of evidence; and, when in least need of care and watchfulness

not to fall, by reason of the strength and vigorous actings of grace, they have *least* need of evidence. So that there is as much need of persons exercising care and diligence to persevere in order to their salvation, as there is of their attention and care to repent and be converted. For our own care and diligence is as much the proper and decreed means of perseverance, as of any thing else; and the want of perseverance, is as much an evidence of the want of true conversion, as the want of conversion is a sign of the want of election. Labour and diligence to persevere, is as rational a way to make sure of the truth of grace, as they are to make sure of the truth of election. God's wrath and future punishment are proposed to all sorts of *men*, as motives to an universal and constant obedience, not only to the wicked, but also to the godly. Indeed, those that have obtained full assurance of their safe estate, are not capable of this motive, and they have no need of it. But when persons are most capable of the fear of hell, through their want of assurance—and their uncertainty, whether or no they are not exposed to damnation—by reason of the weakness of their grace, then they have most need of caution.

Coroll.—Here we may observe, that it is not the scripture way of judging of the truth of grace, to be determined principally by the *method and steps of the first work*, but by the exercise and fruits of grace in a holy life.

§ 3. *Perseverance* in faith is, in one sense, the condition of justification; that is, the promise of acceptance is made only to a persevering sort of faith; and the proper evidence of its being of that sort is actual perseverance. Not but that a man may have good evidences that his faith is of that sort, before he has finished his perseverance, yea, the first time that he exercises such a faith, if the exercises of it are lively and vigorous. But when the believer has those vigorous exercises of faith, by which he has clear evidences of its being of a persevering kind, he evermore feels most disposition and resolution to persevere and most of a spirit of dependance upon God and Christ to enable him so to do.

§ 4. As to passages of Scripture like that, Ezekiel xviii: 24. wherein are declared the fatal consequences of turning or falling away from righteousness, they do not at all argue but that there is an essential difference, in the very nature of

the righteousness of those that persevere, and the righteousness of those that fall away. The one is of a lasting sort, the other not; and so, falling away or holding out, are in those places respected as natural fruits or discoveries of the nature of the righteous or of the wicked. If a man that had a prospect of being ere long in calamitous circumstances, of being poor, and the object of general contempt, and should make this declaration concerning his friend, or him that now appeared to be such, that if his friend would cleave to him through all his circumstances, he would receive him and treat him ever after as his true friend, but otherwise he would utterly desert him as a false friend; this would not argue, that he thought there was no difference between the love of friendship that was persevering, and that which fails when it is tried; but only, that those difficulties discover the difference, and show whose love is of a lasting sort, and whose not. The promises in Scripture are commonly made to the signs of grace; though God knows whether men be sincere or not, without the signs whereby men know it.

§ 5. (God, when he had laid out himself to glorify his mercy and grace in the redemption of poor fallen men, did not see meet, that those who are redeemed by Christ, should be redeemed so imperfectly, as still to have the work of perseverance left in their own hands. They had been found already insufficient for this even in their perfect state, and are now ten times more liable than formerly to fall away and not to persevere, if, in their fallen broken state, with their imperfect sanctification, the care of the matter be trusted with them. Man, though redeemed by Christ, so as to have the holy Spirit of God, and spiritual life again restored in a degree; yet is left a very poor, piteous creature, because all is suspended on his perseverance as it was at first; and the care of that affair is left with him as it was then; and he is ten times more likely to fall away than he was then, if we consider only what he was *in himself* to preserve him from it. The poor creature sees his own insufficiency to stand, from what has happened in time past; his own instability has been his undoing already; and now he is vastly more unstable than before.) The great thing wherein the first covenant was deficient, was, that the fulfilment of the righteousness of the covenant, and man's perseverance, was entrusted with man himself, with nothing better to secure it than his own strength. And therefore, God introduces a better, which

should be an everlasting covenant, a new and living way; wherein that which was wanting in the first should be supplied, and a remedy should be provided against that, which under the first covenant proved man's undoing, viz. man's own weakness and instability; by a mediator being given, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; who cannot fail; who should undertake for his people, and take care of them. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him; and ever lives to make intercession for them. (God did not see it fit that man should be trusted to stand in his own strength a second time. It is not fit that in a covenant of grace, wherein all is of mere, free, and absolute grace, that the reward of life should be suspended on the perseverance of man, as dependant on the strength and stedfastness of his own will. It is a covenant of works, and not a covenant of grace, that suspends eternal life on what is the fruit of a man's own strength.) Eternal life was to have been of works in those two respects, viz. as it was to have been for man's own righteousness, and as it was suspended on the fruit of his own strength. For, though our first parent depended on the grace of God, the influences of his Spirit in his heart; yet that grace was given him already, and dwelt in him constantly, and without interruption, in such a degree as to hold him above any lust or sinful habit or principle. Eternal life was not merely suspended on that grace that was given him and dwelt in him, but on his improvement of that grace which he already had. For, in order to his perseverance, there was nothing further promised beyond his own strength; no extraordinary occasional assistance was promised. It was not *promised* but that man should be left to himself as he was. But the new covenant is of grace, in a manner distinguishing from the old, in both these respects, that the reward of life is suspended neither on his own strength nor worthiness. It provides something above either. But if eternal life under the new covenant was suspended on man's own perseverance, or his perseveringly using diligent endeavours to stand without the promise of any thing farther to ascertain it than his own strength, it would herein be farther from being worthy to be called a covenant of grace than the first covenant; because man's strength is exceedingly less than it was then, and he is under far less advantages to persevere. And if he should obtain eternal life by perseverance in his own strength now, eternal life would, with respect to that, be much more of himself than it would have been by the first covenant; be-

cause perseverance now would be a much greater thing than under those circumstances; and he has but an exceeding small part of that grace dwelling in him, to assist him, that he had then: and that which he has, does not dwell in him in the exercise of it by such a constant law as grace did then, but is put into exercise by the spirit of grace, in a far more arbitrary and sovereign way.

§ 6. Again, Christ came into the world to do that in which mere men failed. He came as a better surety, and that in him those defects might be supplied, which proved to be in our first surety, and that we might have a remedy for the mischief that came by those defects. But the defect of our first surety was, that he did not persevere. He wanted stedfastness; and therefore God sent us, in the next surety, one that could not fail; but should surely persevere. But this is no supply of that defect to us, if the reward of life be still suspended on perseverance, which has nothing, as to ourselves, greater to secure it still, than the strength of mere man; and the perseverance of our second surety is no remedy against the like mischief, which came by failure of our first surety; but on the contrary, we are much more exposed to the mischief than before. The perseverance on which life was suspended, depended then indeed on the strength of *mere* man; but now (on the supposition) it would be suspended on the strength of *fallen* man.

In that our first surety did not persevere, we fell in and with him; for doubtless, if he had stood, we should have stood with him. And therefore when God in mercy has given us a better surety to supply the defects of the first, a surety that might stand and persevere, and one that has actually persevered through the greatest imaginable trials; doubtless we shall stand and persevere in him. After all this, eternal life will not be suspended on our perseverance by our own poor, feeble, broken strength. Our first surety, if he had stood, would have been brought to eat of the tree of life, as a seal of a confirmed state of life in persevering and everlasting holiness and happiness; and he would have eat of this tree of life as a seal of persevering confirmed life, not only for himself, but as our head. As when he eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he tasted as our head, and so brought death on himself and all his posterity; so, if he had persevered, and had eat of the tree of life, he would have tasted of that as our head, and therein life and confirmed holiness

would have been sealed to him and all his posterity. But (Christ, the second Adam, acts the same part for us that the first Adam was to have done, but failed. He has fulfilled the law, and has been admitted to the seals of confirmed and everlasting life. God, as a testimony and seal of his acceptance of what he had done as the condition of life, raised him from the dead, and exalted him with his own right hand, received him up into glory, and gave all things into his hands. Thus the second Adam has persevered, not only for himself, but for us; and has been sealed to confirmed and persevering and eternal life, as our head; so that all those that are his, and who are his spiritual posterity, are sealed in him to persevering life.) Here it will be in vain to object, that persons persevering in faith and holiness is the condition of their being admitted to the state of Christ's posterity, or to a right in him; and that none are admitted as such till they have first persevered. For this is as much as to say, that Christ has no church in this world; and that there are none on this side the grave admitted as his children or people; because they have not yet actually persevered to the end of life, which is the condition of their being admitted as his children and people; which is contrary to the whole Scripture.

(Christ having finished the work of Adam for us, does more than merely to bring us back to the probationary state of Adam, while he had yet his work to finish, knowing his eternal life uncertain, because suspended on his uncertain perseverance. That alone, is inconsistent with Christ's being a second Adam. For if Christ, succeeding in Adam's room, has done and gone through the work that Adam was to have done, and did this as our representative or surety, he has not thereby set us only in Adam's probationary, uncertain state, but has carried us, who are in him, and are represented by him, through Adam's working probationary state, unto that confirmed state that Adam should have arrived at, if he had gone through his own work.)

§ 7. (That the saints shall surely persevere, will necessarily follow from this, that they have already performed the obedience which is the righteousness by which they have *justification* unto life; or it is already performed for them, and imputed to them: For that supposes, that it is the same thing in the sight of God as if they had performed it. Now, when the creature has once actually performed and finished the righteousness of the law, he is immediately sealed and

confirmed to eternal life. There is nothing to keep him off from the tree of life. But as soon as ever a believer has Christ's righteousness imputed to him, he has virtually finished the righteousness of the law.)

It is evident the saints shall persevere, because they are already justified. Adam would not have been justified till he had fulfilled and done his work; and then his justification would have been a confirmation. It would have been an approving of him as having done his work, and as standing entitled to his reward. A servant that is sent out about a work, is not justified by his master till he has done; and then the master views the work, and seeing it to be done according to his order, he then approves and justifies him as having done his work, and being now entitled to the promised reward; and his title to his reward is no longer suspended on any thing remaining. So, Christ having done our work for us, we are justified as soon as ever we believe in him, as being, through what he has accomplished and finished, now already actually entitled to the reward of life. And justification carries in it not only remission of sins, but also being adjudged to life, or accepted as entitled by righteousness to the reward of life; as is evident, because believers are justified by communion with Christ in his justification. But the justification of Christ, did most certainly imply both these things, viz. his being now judged free of that guilt which he had taken upon him, and also his having now fulfilled all righteousness—his having perfectly obeyed the Father, and done enough to entitle him to the reward of life as our head and surety—and therefore he then had eternal life given him as our head. That life which was begun when he was raised from the dead, was eternal life. Christ was then justified in the same sense that Adam would have been justified, if he had finished his course of perfect obedience; and therefore implies in it confirmation in a title to life, as that would have done; and thus, all those that are risen with Christ, and have him for their surety, and so are justified in his justification, are certainly in like manner confirmed. And again, that a believer's justification implies not only a deliverance from the wrath of God, but a title to glory, is evident by Rom. v. 12. where the apostle mentions both these as joint benefits implied in justification: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." So, remission of sins and inheritance among them that

are sanctified, are mentioned together, as what are jointly obtained by faith in Christ : Acts xxvi. 18. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith that is in me." Both these are undoubtedly implied in that passing from death unto life, which Christ speaks of as the fruit of faith, and which he opposes to condemnation : John v. 24. "Verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

To suppose that a right to life is suspended on our own perseverance, which is uncertain, and has nothing more sure and stedfast to secure it than our own good-wills and resolutions, (which way soever we suppose it to be dependant on the strength of our resolutions and wills, either with assistance, or in the improvement of assistance, or in seeking assistance), is exceedingly dissonant to the nature and design of the gospel scheme. For, if it were so, it would unavoidably deprive the believer of the comfort, hope and joy of salvation : which would be very contrary to God's design in the scheme of man's salvation, which is to make the ground of our peace and joy in all respects strong and sure : Or else, He must depend much on himself, and the ground of his joy and hope must in a great measure be his own strength, and the stedfastness of his own heart, the unchangeableness of his own resolutions, &c. ; which would be very different from the gospel scheme.

§ 8. It is one act of faith to commit the soul to Christ's keeping in this sense, viz. to keep it from falling. The believing soul is convinced of its own weakness and helplessness, its inability to resist its enemies, its insufficiency to keep itself, and so commits itself to Christ, that he would be its keeper. The apostle speaks of his committing his soul by faith to Christ, under great sufferings and trials of his perseverance ; 2 Tim. i. 12. "For which cause also I suffer these things. Nevertheless, I am not ashamed : for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." And we are commanded to commit our way and our works unto the Lord ; Psalm xxxvii. 5. Prov. xvi. 3. Faith depends on Christ for all the good we need, and especially good of this kind, which is of such absolute necessity in order to the salvation of our souls. The sum of the good that faith looks for, is the Holy Spirit. It looks for spiritual and eternal life ; for perfect holiness in heaven,

and persevering holiness here.) For the just shall live by faith: It seems to be because continuance in faith is necessary to continuance in justification, at least in part, that the apostle expresses himself as he does, Rom. i. 17. "For therein the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith; as it is written, the just shall live by faith." For it is by faith that we first perceive and know this righteousness, and do at first receive and embrace it; and being once interested in it, we have the continuance of faith in the future persevering exercises of it made sure to us. And thus that is fulfilled, "The just shall live by faith." Agreeable to 1 Pet. i. 5. "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." And also Heb. x. 35—39. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Now, the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

§ 9. Perseverance is acknowledged by Calvinian divines, to be necessary to salvation. Yet it seems to me, that the manner in which it is necessary has not been sufficiently set forth. It is owned to be necessary as a *sine qua non*: and also, that though it is not that by which we first come to have a title to eternal life, yet it is necessary in order to the actual possession of it, as the way to it; that it is as impossible we should come to it without perseverance, as it is impossible for a man to go to a city or town, without travelling throughout the road that leads to it. But we are really saved by perseverance; so that salvation has a dependence on perseverance, as that which influences in the affair, so as to render it congruous that we should be saved. Faith (on our part) is the great condition of salvation; it is that *by* which we are justified and saved. But in this faith, the perseverance that belongs to it is a fundamental ground of the congruity that faith gives to salvation. Perseverance indeed comes into consideration, even in the justification of a sinner, as one thing on which the fitness of acceptance to life depends. For, God has respect to perseverance as being virtually in the first act. And it is looked upon as if it were a property of that faith by which the sinner is then justified. God has respect to continuance in faith; and the sinner is justified by that, as though it already were; be-

cause by divine establishment it shall follow; and so it is accepted, as if it were a property contained in the faith that is then seen. Without this, it would not be congruous that a sinner should be justified at his first believing; but it would be needful that the act of justification should be suspended till the sinner had persevered in faith. There is the same reason why it is necessary that the union between Christ and the soul should remain in order to salvation, as that it should be begun; for it is begun, to the end that it might remain. And if it could be begun without remaining, the beginning would be in vain. The soul is saved no otherwise than by union with Christ, and so is fitly looked upon as his. It is saved *in him*; and in order to that, it is necessary that the soul *now* be in him, even when salvation is actually bestowed, and not merely that it should *once* have been in him; and therefore God, in justifying a sinner, even in the first act of faith, has respect to the congruity between justification and perseverance of faith. So that perseverance is necessary to salvation, not only as a *sine qua non*, or as the way to possession; but it is necessary even to the congruity of justification.

§ 10. That perseverance is thus necessary to salvation, not only as a *sine qua non*, but by reason of such an influence and dependence, seems manifest from scripture; as particularly, Heb. x. 38, 39. "Now the just shall live by faith. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul" Rom. xi. 20. "Well, because of unbelief they were broken off. But thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear." John xv. 7. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Heb. iii. 14. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." Chap. v. 12. "Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." So that not only the first act of faith, but subsequent acts of faith, and perseverance in faith, do justify the sinner; although salvation is in itself sure and certain after the first act. For the way in which the first act of faith justifies, is not by making the futurition of salvation certain in itself; for that is as certain in itself by the divine decree, before the first act of faith, as afterwards. Salvation is in some sense the sinner's right, before he believes. It was given him in Christ,

before the world was. But before a sinner believes, he has not any thing from God that he can lay hold of, so as to either challenge it, or on good grounds hope for it. He cannot be said to have any right, because he has no congruity; and as to the promise made to Christ, he has no hold of that, because that is not revealed to him. If God had declared and promised to the angels that such a man should be saved; that would not give him any right of his own, or any ground of challenge. A promise is a manifestation of a person's design of doing some good to another, to the end that he may depend on it, and rest in it. The certainty in him arises from the manifestation; and the obligation in justice to him arises from the manifestation being made to him, to the effect that he might depend on it. And therefore subsequent acts of faith may be said to give a sinner a title to salvation, as well as the first. For, from what has been said, it appears that the congruity arises from them, as well as the first; they in like manner containing the nature of union to Christ as mediator; and they may have as great, nay, a greater hand in the manifestation of the futurity of salvation to us for our dependence, than the first act. For our knowledge of this may proceed mainly from after acts, and from a course of acts. The scripture speaks of after acts of faith in both Abraham and Noah, as giving a title to the righteousness which is the matter of justification. See Rom. iv. 3.; Heb. xi. 7.

§ 11. (The doctrine of perseverance is manifest from the nature of the *mediation* of Christ. For as Christ is a mediator to reconcile God to man, and man to God, and as he is a middle person between both, and has the nature of both, so he undertakes for each, and, in some respect, becomes surety for each with the other. He undertakes and becomes a surety for man to God. He engages for him, that the law, that was given him, shall be answered; and that justice, with respect to him, shall be satisfied, and the honour of God's majesty vindicated. So he undertakes and engages for the Father with man, in order to their being reconciled to God, and induced to come to him, to love him, and trust confidently in him, and rest quietly in him. He undertakes for the Father's acceptance and favour, John xiv. 21. "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father." He undertakes that the Father shall hear and answer their prayers. He becomes surety to see that their prayers are answered; John xiv. 13. "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, that will

I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." He undertakes that they shall have all necessary supplies of grace from the Father ; and he engages for the continuance of God's presence with them, and the continuance of his favour, and of the supplies of grace necessary to uphold and preserve them, and keep them from finally perishing ; John xiv. 16. " And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." And v. 23. " If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." Christ does not only declare that God will give us needed grace, but he himself undertakes to see it done. He promises that he will bestow it from the Father ; John xv. 26. " But when the comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father." It was necessary that some one should thus undertake for God with man, for the continuance of his pardoning and sanctifying grace, in order to the sinner's being fully reconciled to God, and brought fully and quietly to rest in him as his God : otherwise the sinner, conscious of his own weakness and sinfulness, could have no quiet rest in God, for fear of the union being broken between God and him, and for fear of incurring God's displeasure and wrath, and so having God an enemy for ever. He is in a capacity to undertake for us, and be surety for us, with the Father, because he puts himself in our stead. He also is in a capacity to undertake for the Father, and be surety for him with us, because the Father hath put him in his stead. He puts himself in our stead as priest, and answers for us, and does and suffers in that office what we should have done and suffered ; and God puts him in his stead as king. He is appointed to the government of the world, as God's vicegerent, and so, in that office, answers for God to us, and does, and orders and bestows, that which we need from God. He undertakes for us in things that are expected of us as subjects, because he puts himself into our subjection. He appears in the form of a servant for us. So he undertakes for the Father, in that which is desired and hoped for of him as king : for the Father hath put him into his kingdom and dominion, and has committed all authority and power unto him. He is in a capacity to undertake for the Father with us, because he can say, as in John xvi. 15. " All things that the Father hath are mine."

§ 12. The first covenant failed of bringing man to the glory of God, through man's instability, whereby he failed of

perseverance. Man's changeableness was the thing wherein it was weak. It was weak through the *flesh*.* But God had made a second covenant in mercy to fallen man, that in the way of this covenant he might be brought to the glory of God, which he failed of under the other. But it is God's manner, in things that he appoints and constitutes, when one thing fails of its proper end, he appoints another to succeed in the room of it; to introduce that the second time, in which the weaknesses and defects of the former are supplied, and which never shall fail, but shall surely reach its end, and so shall remain as that which needs no other to succeed it. So God removed the first dispensation by Moses, Heb. viii. 7—13. "For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second, &c. So the priesthood of the order of Aaron ceases, because of the weakness and insufficiency of it to answer the ends of priesthood, which are, to reconcile God to man. Therefore God introduces another priesthood, of the order of Melchizedec, that is sufficient, and cannot fail, and remains for ever. Heb. vii. So Moses, the first leader of Israel, failed of bringing them into Canaan; but Joshua, the second leader, did not fail. The kingdom of Saul, the first anointed of the Lord, did not continue; but the kingdom of the second anointed remains for ever. The first sanctuary, that was built in Israel, was a moveable tabernacle, and therefore ready to vanish away, or be removed finally:—and God forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh. But the second sanctuary was a firm building, an immoveable temple, which was typically an everlasting sanctuary, and that which God would never forsake; 2 Sam. vii. 10, 11. So the first covenant, that God made with Adam, failed, because it was weak through the weakness of human nature, to whose strength and stability the keeping was entrusted. Therefore God introduces another better covenant, committed not to his strength, but to the strength of one that was mighty and stable, and therefore is a sure and everlasting covenant. God entrusted the affair of man's happiness on a weak foundation at first, to shew man that the *foundation* was weak, and not to be trusted to, that he might trust in God alone. The first was only to make way for the second. God lighted up a divine light in man's soul at the first; but it remained on such a foundation, that Satan found

* Not properly through the *flesh*, but through that *passive power*, that cause of liability to fail, that want of essential perfection (the only ground of infallibility) which belonged to the whole man, prior to any moral defect. W.

means to extinguish it ; and therefore, when God lights it up a second time, it is, that it may never be extinguished.

§ 13. Some things may yet remain, that are properly the conditions of salvation ; on which salvation may be suspended, that it may well excite to the utmost caution, lest we should come short of eternal life, and should perish for the want of them, after it is already become impossible that we should fail of salvation. For the condition on which the man Christ Jesus was to obtain eternal life, was his doing the work which God had given him to do ; his performing perfect persevering obedience, and his therein conquering Satan and the world, and all opposition, and enduring all sufferings that he met with. Therefore Christ used the utmost diligence to do this work, and used the utmost caution lest he should fail of it ; and prayed with strong crying and tears, and wrestled with God in a bloody sweat, that he might not fail, but might have God's help to go through. Yet it was impossible he should fail of eternal life, and the whole reward that had been promised him. The joy that was set before him, was not only certain to him, but he had a proper title to it as God's heir, by reason of his relation to God the Father, as being his only begotten Son. It was impossible that he should fail in the work to which he was appointed, as God had promised him sufficient and effectual grace and help to persevere, and already had made known his election : Psal. cx. 7. " He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head." Isaiah xlii. 1. " Behold my Servant whom I uphold ; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Verse 4. " He shall not fail nor be discouraged." And verse 6. " I the Lord have called thee in righteousness : I will hold thine hand and keep thee." So it was in effect promised in the revelations that were made to Mary and Joseph, Zechariah, &c. and so to himself in answer to his prayers, by a voice from heaven. " I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." It appears that all was certain beforehand, by God's actually saving great numbers beforehand, on the ground of his future perseverance in his work.

§ 14. Grace is that which God implants in the heart against great opposition of enemies, great opposition from the corruption of the heart, and from Satan and the world. Great are the efforts of all these against the implantation of it, and they all labour to the utmost to keep it out. Seeing

therefore that God manifests his all-conquering power in giving grace a place in the heart in spite of those enemies, he will doubtless maintain it there against their united efforts to root it out. He that has so gloriously conquered them in bringing in grace, will not at last suffer himself to be conquered, by their expelling that which he has so brought in by his mighty power. He that gloriously subdued those enemies under his feet, by bringing this image of his into the soul will not suffer this image of his finally to be trampled under their feet. God alone could introduce it. It was what he undertook; and it was wholly his work, and doubtless he will maintain it. He will not forsake the work of his own hands. Where he has begun a good work, he will carry it on to the day of Christ. Grace shall endure all things, and shall remain under all things; as the expressions πάντα κτομένα literally signifies, in 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

§ 15. The Spirit of God was given at first, but was lost. God gives it a second time, never to be utterly lost. The Spirit is now given in another manner than he was then. Then indeed he was communicated, and dwelt in their hearts. But this communication was made without conveying at the same time any proper right or sure title to it. But when God communicates it the second time, as he does to a true convert, he withal gives it to him to be his own; he finally makes it over to him in a sure covenant. He is their purchased and promised possession. Man, in his first estate, had no benefit at all properly made over to him: For God makes over benefits only by covenant: And then the condition of the covenant had not been fulfilled. But now, man, at his first conversion, is justified and adopted: he is received as a child and an heir, as a joint heir with Christ. His fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. God is theirs, and Christ is theirs; and the Holy Ghost is theirs; and all things are theirs. The Holy Spirit, who is the sum of all good, is their inheritance; and that little of it that they have in this life, is the earnest of their future inheritance, till the redemption of the purchased possession. Heaven is theirs: their conversation is there. They are citizens of that city, and of the household of God. Christians are represented as being come already to heaven, to Mount Zion, the city of the living God; to an innumerable company of angels, &c.—Heaven is the proper country of the church. They are raised up together with Christ, and made to fit together in heavenly places: Eph. ii. 6. “They are blessed with all spiritual bles-

sings in heavenly places." The whole tenor of the gospel shows, that Christians have actually a full and final right made over to them, to spiritual and heavenly blessings.

§ 16. That the saints should be earnestly exhorted and pressed to care and caution, and earnest endeavours to persevere, is most reasonable; and it cannot be otherwise, notwithstanding their having an absolute, unchangeable promise, that they shall persevere. For still perseverance is their duty, and what they are to do in obedience to God. For that is the notion of perseverance, their holding out in the way of God's commandments. But if it were absurd to command them to persevere, as the work they have to do, then how would they do it in obedience to him? The angels in heaven are confirmed, and it is promised unto them that they never shall sin: Yet it is proper for God to give them commands, though in so doing he requires the improvement of their care and endeavours to obey and fulfil his will exactly. It is not obedience, if they do not take care and endeavour to obey. If they should cease to take care, that very thing would prove their fall. So, in this case, if Christians cease to take care to persevere, that very thing is falling away.

§ 17. It shows the infallible perseverance of true Christians, that their spiritual life is a participation with Christ in the life that he received as risen from the dead. For they live by Christ's living in them: Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." That is, by the life that he has received since his resurrection, and by his communicating to them that fullness which he received when he rose from the dead. When he rose, he received the promise of the Father, the Spirit of life without measure, and he sheds it forth on believers. The oil poured on the risen head goes down to the skirts of the garments; and thus Christ lives in believers by his Spirit dwelling in them. Believers, in their conversion, are said to be risen with Christ; Col. ii. 12, 13. "Ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the circumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him." And chap. iii. 1. "If ye then be risen with Christ," &c. And Eph. ii. 5, 6. "Even when we were dead in sins,

hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together." Rom. v. 10. "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." This spiritual resurrection and life is procured and purchased for Christ's members, by Christ's suffering obedience, in the same manner as his own resurrection and life is purchased by it. And they receive life as united to him, as members of a risen Saviour, and as being married in their conversion to him.

§ 18. The perseverance of faith is necessary to a congruity to salvation. For it is implied in several places of Scripture, that if true believers should fail in persevering in faith, they would be in a lost state; John xviii. 89. "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, "Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none:" *i. e.* Christ took care that they might go away, that they might not be in the way of such temptations as would be in danger of overthrowing them, so that they should not persevere. And it is implied, that if they were overthrown, and should not persevere, Christ would have lost them; the saving relation that they stood in to Christ would have been dissolved. The same seems fully implied in Christ's prayer in the 17th chapter of John. Thus, he makes use not only of their having received God's word, and believed that God had sent him, but their having kept his word, as a good plea for their title to that favour and acceptance of the Father, which he asks of the Father for them; as ver 6, 7, 8, &c.—The same is implied in the 11th verse: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." This implies, that their being one, or their standing in a saving relation to him, and in union with his mystical body, depends on the perseverance of their faith, even that union on which a title to all spiritual and saving benefits depends, which is more fully spoken of in the 21st and following verses. This perseverance of believers seems to be the benefit, which is the principal subject of this whole prayer. And in Luke xxii. 31, 32. it is implied, that if Peter's faith had failed, Satan would have had him: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." Where it seems

implied, that if they were not kept through faith, or if their faith did not persevere, they never would come to salvation. So, believers being overthrown in their faith, or their not knowing Christ's voice and following him, is called a being plucked out of Christ's hand; and it is implied, that the consequence would be their perishing. It also seems to be implied, that their possession of eternal life by Christ's gift depends on their perseverance; John x. 27, 28. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of mine hand." And in the 15th chapter of John, believers persevering in faith in Christ, or their abiding in him, is spoken of as necessary to the continuance of the saving union and relation that is between Christ and believers, and Christ's abiding in them; as ver. 4, 5. "Abide in me, and I in you.—I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." And in the 6th verse, it is spoken of as the necessary consequence of their not abiding in Christ, if that were possible; that the union should be utterly broken between Christ and them, and that damnation should be the consequence. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned." And in the 7th verse, this perseverance of faith is spoken of as the necessary means of the success of faith as expressed in prayer, which is faith's voice, necessary to obtain those good things which faith and prayer seek, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." And in the 9th and 10th verses, it is implied, that Christ's acceptance of us, and favour to us as his, depends on our perseverance: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you. Continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." So, the same perseverance is spoken of as necessary to our continuing in the favour and grace of God. "Now, when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God." And so it is spoken of as necessary to continuing in the goodness of God; and being cut off, is spoken of as a certain consequence of the contrary.

Rom. xi. 22. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness : otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off." That expression, of standing fast *in the Lord*, 1 Thess. iii. 8. and Phil. iv. 1. implies that perseverance is necessary to a continuing in Christ, or in a saving relation to him ; and more plainly still in 1 John ii. 24. "Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." See 1 Cor. xv. 2. and 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. and Heb. xii 28. See also Jer. iii. 19.

§ 19. Concerning the objection from Ezekiel xviii. 24. "If the righteous shall fall from his righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered ; but in the iniquity which he hath done shall he die," and the like ; God saying this does not at all prove, that it is supposed possible that a truly righteous man should fall from his righteousness ; any more than God's saying, Levit. xviii. 4, 5. "Ye shall do my judgments and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein : I am the Lord your God : ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them." The Scripture in saying, he that doeth these things shall live in them, does not design to teach us, that in the present state of things, it is possible for us to do those things in a legal sense, (in which sense the words are certainly proposed, as the apostle teaches) ; but only teaches the certain connexion there is between doing these things and living in them, for wise ends ; particularly to lead us, by such a legal proposal, to see our utter inability to obtain life by our own doings. So the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The Scripture in saying, if the righteous shall fall away from his righteousness, he shall die ; does not teach us, that in the present state of things, since the fall, it is possible for a truly righteous man to fall from his righteousness ; but only teaches us the certain connexion between the antecedent and the consequent, for wise ends ; and particularly, that those who think themselves righteous, may beware of falling from righteousness. For it is not unreasonable to suppose that God should put us on bewareing of those things that are already impossible, any more than that he should direct us to seek and pray for those things that are promised and certain.

§ 20. With respect to those texts in Ezekiel—that speak of a righteous man's falling away from his righteousness—the doctrine of perseverance was not so fully revealed under that dispensation. It was of service to the godly to make them wary; but especially to those who were legally righteous, and trusted in their own righteousness, as Ezekiel's hearers did; to convince them of this, that there was a connexion between the antecedent, falling way, and the consequent, the dying in their iniquity. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." And it is so spoken of once and again by this very prophet, chap. xi. 17—21. and chap. xxxvi. 24—29. Yea, in this very chapter, after he had been declaring the danger of falling away from righteousness, the children of Israel seem to be exhorted to this very thing as a remedy against falling away; ver. 31. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" They needed not only to turn from their transgressions, but to cast them away utterly, to have finally done with them, and to make them a new heart; for the prophet declares, that their old heart was a backsliding heart, bent to backslide, as the prophet often complains.

§ 21. The godly themselves were really exposed to die in their iniquity, *i. e.* they were liable to be destroyed by God's awful judgments in this world. The prophet has a special eye to those destroying judgments that God had lately brought on the nation of the Jews, which are very much the subject of the prophecy, and seem to have given occasion for it, and which the Jews had respect to in the proverb which they used, and which gave occasion to what is said in this chapter. If the sinner turned from his outward wickedness, unto an outward righteousness only, he would save his soul alive with regard to those outward calamities; and if the righteous fall away outwardly by committing some grievous sin, and getting into a bad way, they exposed themselves to die by this their iniquity in this manner.

§ 22. That there is a real difference between them that

fall away, and them that persevere, even before they fall away, is evident by the things that are given as a reason of their falling away: because they have no root in themselves; because they have not counted the cost, and because they have no oil in their vessels. Those that have no root, differ from those who have root, before there be the *effect* of their having no root: And so those that have no oil, &c. And it appears again, by what is said, John ii. 23. that "when Christ was at Jerusalem at the passover, on the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." And so, "They went out from us, because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

§ 23. *Objection.* But it is in the same chapter said, "That if a wicked man turn from his wickedness and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live:" where doubtless must be understood by "doing that which is lawful and right," sincere and gracious righteousness, because there is a promise of life. And we must doubtless understand doing that which is lawful and right here, in the same sense as before. *Answer.* We may understand it in the same sense, for an external, visible, material righteousness. When it is said, if he turn from his iniquity and do that which is lawful and right, it must be understood, if he continue so to do, and do not turn from it again. According to the schemes of both Arminians and Calvinists, this must be understood. Whereby the objection is overthrown.

Visible Christians are in Scripture called saints, or holy; which is equivalent to the calling them righteous. The Jews are called an holy nation; the land is a land of uprightness; when only visibility is intended.—By righteous, sometimes is meant only innocent, or materially righteous in some particular. "Wilt thou also destroy a righteous nation?" Gen. xx. 4. Exod. xxiii. 7. "The innocent and the righteous, slay thou not:" Deut. xxv. 1. "Ye shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked:" 1 Sam. iv. 11. "How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person?" 2 Kings x. 9. By the righteous man that the prophet Ezekiel speaks of, he certainly does not speak in so limited a sense as to mean those that are of perfect and upright hearts, but so as to include those of an unsound heart, that trust in their own righte-

ousness to commit iniquity; See Ezek. xxxiii. 13.; *i. e.* those whose motive is only self-love, and their own safety, and so trust that they have righteousness enough to render them safe, though they do commit sin. Those that are only restrained from committing sin by fear, and are ready to embrace, and are glad of opportunities of committing sin with impunity; these cannot be such as the sincerely righteous are often described to be, *viz.* such as love God with all their hearts and souls; that love the way of his commandments; that choose the way of his commands, &c. The reason why some do not persevere, is, that there is not now a right heart in them; as is evident by Deut. v. 29. "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep my commandments!" &c.

§ 24. When it is said, "If a righteous man turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, his righteousness shall not be remembered, but he shall die in his iniquity;" we need not, according to the Scripture manner of expression, understand any thing, but his seeming righteousness, or the righteousness that he *seemeth* to have. Christ has often such an aphorism as this, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath;" which he applies to that apparent godliness, grace or piety, which natural men have, as is evident by the contexts, and the occasions of his using this aphorism; as Matt. xiii. 12. and Matt. xxv. 29. and Mark iv. 25. This, in another place, is explained thus, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he *seemeth* to have;" Luke viii. 18. Being a righteous man, does indeed commonly signify to be one that is truly and sincerely godly. And so is believing in Christ mentioned frequently as the distinguishing character of one that is truly Christ's disciple. Yet we read of some that are said to believe, who, even at that very time, are spoken of wanting something necessary to make them true disciples: John ii. 23, 24, 25. "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself to them, because he knew all men; and needed not that any should testify of men, for he knew what was in man." These words intimate, that though they believed, yet Christ knew that they had not that in them then, that was to be depended on for perseverance: which

implies, that if they were true believers, of a right principle, their perseverance might be depended on. And we are elsewhere told, why some that believe, endure but for a while, and do not persevere, viz. because they have *no root* in themselves.

§ 25. That there is an essential difference between the faith and seeming grace of such professors as fall away, and such as persevere, even before any distinction appears as to perseverance, or while both retain their religion, is exceedingly manifest by John vi. 64, 65. "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." And verse 70. "And Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Here, before Judas had fallen away, he is said not to believe, and to be a devil. Now Judas was a professing disciple and a distinguished one. He was a visible believer. Christ speaks of him as one that had forsaken all and followed him in the regeneration, as is evident in Matt. xix. 27, 28. ; and as one that had continued with Christ in his temptations, Luke xxii. 28.—compared with verse 30. There were great appearances of true grace in him, as there were in Ahitophel, his type, with whom David took sweet counsel, &c. And therefore, as a righteous man, Christ had given him the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and sent him forth to preach the gospel, and heal the sick, and cast out devils.—Yet he, even before he fell away, is said not to believe, but to be then a devil; which is agreeable to what the apostle says of apostates, "They went out from us, because they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

§ 26. That they who once truly believe in Christ, never fall away finally and perish, is evident, because they that now believe not, and are in a state of condemnation, are spoken of as those that *never have* believed, John iii. 18. "Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Which supposes, that none of those that have believed, are now unbelievers, or are now in a state of condemnation. So again, those who shall be condemned at the day of judgment, are represented as those, not only whom Christ then will know not, but as those whom he never knew, Matt.

vii. 23. But how can this be a true representation, if some of them were once true Christians, and so were known and owned by Christ, but only have since apostatized? “When St. Paul kept under his body lest he should be a cast away, 1 Cor. ix. 27. he did no otherwise than he was wont to do in temporal concerns, in cases wherein he was beforehand certain of the event. So he sent word to the chief captain of the Jews lying in wait to kill him, lest he should be murdered by them, though it was revealed to him from God, but the very night before, that he should live to see Rome; Acts xxiii. 12—21. So he would not allow the sailors to leave the ship.” &c. *Bellamy's True Religion, Disc. 1. Inference 9.* 1 John iii. 6. “Who-soever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.” This could not be true, if a man who has truly seen him, and known him, might finally fall away to sin.

§ 27. As to scripture *cautions* against falling away, lest it should issue in damnation; we may observe that God had been pleased to connect eternal life with eating the fruit of the tree of life; and therefore, although it was utterly impossible that Adam should have eternal life in himself, after he had fallen, as God's peremptory declaration and unalterable constitution had made it impossible; yet we are told, that after the fall, God placed cherubims and a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life, lest the man should put forth his hand, and take and eat of the fruit of the tree, and live for ever. So God has connected damnation with living in allowed sin, and being overcome by sin, and brought under its power. And therefore, although it be impossible, that men, after they are once truly converted, should ever perish, yet they are warned against falling away and yielding to the power of sin, lest they should perish: and the apostle Paul kept under his body, lest he should be a cast away.

§ 28. As to *Objections* from such hypothetical propositions as those, Heb. x. 27, &c. “If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth.” Heb. vi. 4, &c. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, if they fall away,” &c. Such hypothetical propositions may be true, when one or both parts of it are impossible, as the truth of such a proposition consists in the connexion of the antecedent and consequent; as when our Lord said to the Jews, “If I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you.” See *Gill against Whitby*, vol. i. page 271.

§ 29. *Objection.* That we are required to TAKE CARE and to PRAY that we may persevere. It was impossible for Christ to fail under his *trials*; and yet how evident is it that he used means, endeavours, care, labour, and earnest prayers, that he might persevere?—In order to shew, that an absolute promise of perseverance does consist with counsels and exhortations to *endeavour*, and *care* to persevere, I would lay down the following positions.

Position I. What it is proper for us to seek by earnest and importunate prayer, it is proper for us to use means, *labour and care, for that end.* The reason is plain: prayer is one kind of seeking the thing; it is using means, and one way of labouring for it, taking care to obtain it, and pursuing after it. There are many instances of prayer, and commands to pray for things promised. Christ on earth prayed for things promised; and he continually interceeds in heaven for things promised.

Position II. What it is proper that persons should use endeavours, means, and care for, they are properly *exhorted* to use those means and endeavours.

Position III. That which it is proper for another to use means, labours and care for, that he may obtain it, though he knows it is certainly promised, it is proper that we should use means, &c. to obtain for ourselves, though it is promised. But Christ used means, endeavours, labour, &c. for the salvation of sincerely good men, though it be promised. He laboured, took care, denied himself, and suffered for the salvation of sincerely good men; which yet had been before abundantly promised to him, and promised to men in the Old Testament; and Christ himself had promised it. The Scripture represents, that Christ ran a race to win a prize, and endured the cross for the joy that was set before him.

§ 30. If it were left to the freedom of men's own will, whether men should persevere, in the sense that the Arminians suppose; *i. e.* to a will not determined by God, but self-determined, then it would be absurd to pray to God that we may persevere; that he would keep us from falling, and that he would uphold our goings in his paths, &c.

§ 31. If grace implanted in the heart be not an infallible sign that a man shall have eternal life, how is the

Spirit of God an earnest of glory? when a man may have the Spirit, and yet have no assurance, that he shall be glorified. For every one who has the grace of God implanted in his heart, has the Holy Spirit of God, in his sanctifying influences.

CHAP. VI.

CONCERNING THE NECESSITY AND REASONABLENESS OF THE
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SATISFACTION FOR SIN.

§ 1. **T**HE necessity of satisfaction for sin, and the reasonableness of that Christian doctrine, may appear from the following considerations: *Justice* requires that sin be punished, because sin deserves punishment. What the demerit of sin calls for, justice calls for; for it is only the same thing in different words. For the notion of a desert of punishment, is the very same as a just connexion with punishment. None will deny but that there is such a thing, in some cases, as the desert or demerit of a crime, its calling for, or requiring punishment. And, to say that the desert of a crime does require punishment, is just the same thing as to say, the reason why it requires it is, that it deserves it. So that the suitability of the connexion between the crime and the punishment, consists in the desert; and therefore, wherever desert is, there is such suitability. None will deny that some crimes are so horrid, and so deserving of punishment, that it is requisite they should not go unpunished, unless something very considerable be done to make up for the crime; either some answerable repentance, or some other compensation, that in some measure at least balances the desert of punishment, and so, as it were, takes it off, or disannuls it: otherwise the desert of punishment remaining, all will allow, that it is fit and becoming, and to be desired, that the crime should be severely punished. And why is it so, but only from the demerit of the crime, or because the crime so much deserves such a punishment? It justly excites so great abhorrence and indignation, that it is requisite there should be a punishment answerable to this abhorrence and indignation that is fitly excited by it. But by this, all is granted that needs to be granted, to show, that desert of punishment carries in it a requisiteness of the punishment deserved. For if greater crimes do very much require punishment, because of their great demerit, lesser crimes will also require punishment, but only in a lesser degree, proportionably to their demerit; because the ground of the requisiteness of the punishment

of great crimes, is their demerit. It is requisite that they should be punished, on no other account but because they deserve it.

§ 2. Besides, if it be allowed that it is requisite that great crimes should be punished with punishment in some measure answerable to the heinousness of the crime, without something to balance them, some answerable repentance or other satisfaction, because of their great demerit and the great abhorrence and indignation they justly excite: it will follow, that it is requisite that God should punish all sin with infinite punishment; because all sin, as it is against God, is infinitely heinous, and has infinite demerit, is justly infinitely hateful to him, and so stirs up infinite abhorrence and indignation in him. Therefore, by what was before granted, it is requisite that God should punish it, unless there be something in some measure to balance this desert. Now there can be no repentance of it, or sorrow for it, in any measure answerable or proportionable to the heinousness of the demerit of the crime; because that is infinite, and there can be no infinite sorrow for sin in finite creatures; yea, there can be none that bears any proportion to it. Repentance is as nothing in comparison of it, and therefore can weigh nothing when put in the scales with it, and so does nothing at all towards compensating it, or diminishing the desert or requisiteness of punishment, any more than if there were no repentance. If any ask, why God could not pardon the injury on repentance, without other satisfaction, without any wrong to justice; I ask the same person, why he could not also pardon the injury *without* repentance? For all the repentance men are capable of, is as no repentance at all, in comparison with the greatness of the injury; for it bears no proportion to it. And it would be as dishonourable and unfit for God to pardon the injury without any repentance at all, as to do it merely on the account of a repentance that bears no more proportion to the injury, than none at all. Therefore, we are not forgiven on repentance, because it in anywise compensates, or takes off, or diminishes the desert or requisiteness of punishment; but because of the respect that evangelical repentance has to compensation already made.

§ 3. If sin, therefore, deserves punishment, that is the same thing as to say, that it is fit and proper that it should be punished. If the case be so, that sin deserves punishment

from men; in those cases it is proper it should receive punishment from men. A fault cannot be properly said to deserve punishment from any, but those to whom it belongs to inflict punishment when it is deserved. In those cases, therefore, wherein it belongs to men to inflict punishment, it is proper for them to inflict that punishment that it is deserved of them. Again, if sin's desert of punishment be the proper ground of the fitness of its connection with punishment; or rather be that wherein fitness of the connexion consists; it will thence follow, not only that it is fit that the sin which deserves punishment, should be punished, but also that it should be punished as it deserves. It is meet that a person's state should be agreeable to the quality of his dispositions and voluntary actions. Suffering is suitable and answerable to the quality of sinful dispositions and actions; it is suitable that they who do evil, should receive evil in proportion to the evil that they do or will. It is but justice that it should be so; and when sin is punished, it receives but its own, or that which is suitably connected with it. But it is a contradiction to say that it is suitably connected with punishment, or that it is suitable that it should be connected with it, and yet that it is suitable it should not be connected with it. All sin may be resolved into hatred of God and our neighbour; as all our duty may be resolved into love to God and our neighbour. And it is but meet that this spirit of enmity should receive a return in its own kind, that it should receive enmity again. Sin is of such a nature, that it wishes ill, and aims at ill to God and man; but to God especially. It strikes at God; it would, if it could, procure his misery and non-existence. It is but suitable, that with what measure it metes, it should be measured to it again. It is but suitable that men should reap what they sow, and that the rewards of every man's hand should be given him. This is what the consciences of all men naturally declare. There is nothing that men know sooner, after they come to the exercise of their reason, than that, when they have done wickedness, they deserve punishment. The consciences not only of Christians, and those who have been educated in the principles of divine revelation, but also the consciences of heathens inform them of this: therefore, unless conscience has been stupified by frequent violations, when men have done wickedness there remains a sense of guilt upon their minds; a sense of an obligation to punishment. It is natural to expect that which conscience or reason tells them it is suitable should come; and

therefore they are afraid and jealous, and ready to flee when no man pursues. Seeing therefore it is requisite that sin should be punished, as punishment is deserved and just; therefore the *justice* of God obliges him to punish sin. For it belongs to God, as the Supreme Ruler of the universality of things, to maintain order and decorum in his kingdom, and to see to it that decency and righteousness take place in all cases. That perfection of his nature whereby he is disposed to this, is his justice: therefore his justice naturally disposes him to punish sin as it deserves.

§ 4. The *holiness* of God, which is the infinite opposition of his nature to sin, naturally and necessarily disposes him to punish sin. In deed his justice is part of his holiness. But when we speak of God's justice inclining him to punish sin, we have respect only to that exercise of his holiness whereby he loves that holy and beautiful order that consists in the connexion of one thing with another, according to their nature, and so between sin and punishment; and his opposition to that which would be so unsuitable as a disconnexion of these things. But now I speak of the holiness of God as appearing not directly and immediately in his hatred of an unsuitable, hateful disconnexion between sin and that which is proper for it; but in his hatred of sin itself or the opposition of his nature to the odious nature of sin. If God's nature be infinitely opposite to sin, then doubtless he has a disposition answerable to oppose it in his acts and works. If he by his nature be an enemy to sin with an infinite enmity, then he is doubtless disposed to act as an enemy to it, or to do the part of an enemy to it. And if he be disposed naturally to do the part of an enemy against sin, or, which is the same thing, against the faultiness or blameworthiness of moral agents; then it will follow, he is naturally disposed to act as an enemy to those that are the persons faulty and blameworthy, or are chargeable with the guilt of it, as being the persons faulty. Indignation is the proper exercise of hatred of any thing as a fault or thing blameable; and there could be no such thing either in the Creator or creature, as hatred of a fault without indignation, unless it be conceived or hoped that the fault is suffered for, and so the indignation be satisfied. Whoever finds a hatred to a fault, and at the same time imputes the fault to him that committed it, he therein feels an indignation against him for it. So that God, by his

necessary infinite hatred of sin, is necessarily disposed to punish it with a punishment answerable to his hatred.

§ 5. It does not become the Sovereign of the world, a being of infinite glory, purity and beauty, to suffer such a thing as sin, an uncomely disorder, an infinitely detestable pollution, to appear in the world subject to his government, without his making an opposition to it, or giving some public manifestations and tokens of his infinite abhorrence of it; for "he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity;" Hab. i. 13. It is natural in such a case to expect tokens of the utmost opposition. If we could behold the infinite Fountain of purity and holiness, and could see what an infinitely pure flame it is, and with what a pure brightness it shines, so that the heavens appear impure when compared with it; and then should behold some infinitely odious and detestable filthiness brought and set in its presence: would it not be natural to expect some ineffably vehement opposition made to it? and would not the want of it be indecent and shocking?

§ 6. If it be to God's glory that he is in his nature infinitely holy and opposite to sin; then it is to his glory to be infinitely displeased with sin. And if it be to God's glory to be infinitely displeased with sin; then it must be to his glory to exercise and manifest that displeasure, and to act accordingly. But the proper exercise and testimony of displeasure against sin, in the Supreme Being and absolute Governor of the world, is taking vengeance. Men may show their hatred of sin by lamenting it, and mourning for it, and taking great pains, and undergoing great difficulties to prevent or remove it, or by approving God's vengeance for it. Taking vengeance is not the proper way of fellow subjects hatred of sin; but it is in the Supreme Lord and Judge of the world, to whom vengeance belongs; because he has the ordering and government of all things, and therefore the suffering of sin to go unpunished would in him be a conniving at it. Taking vengeance is as much the proper manifestation of God's displeasure at sin, as a mighty work is the proper manifestation of his power, or as a wise work is the proper manifestation of his wisdom. There may be other testimonies of God's displeas'dness with and abhorrence of sin, without testifying his displeasure in con-dign punishment. He might declare he has such a displeasure and abhorrence. So there might be other testimonies of God's

power and wisdom, besides a powerful wise effect. He might have declared himself to be infinitely wise and powerful. But yet there would have been wanting the proper manifestations of God's power and wisdom, if God had only declared himself to be possessed of these attributes. The creatures might have believed him to be all-wise and almighty; but by seeing his mighty and wise works, they see his power and wisdom. So if there had been only a declaration of God's abhorrence and displeasure against sin, the creature might have believed it, but could not have seen it, unless he should also take vengeance for it.

§ 7. The honour of the *greatness*, *excellency* and *majesty* of God's being, requires that sin be punished with an infinite punishment. Hitherto I have spoken of the requisite-ness of God's punishing sin, on account of the demerit and hatefulness of it absolutely considered, and not directly as God is interested in the affair. But now, if we consider sin as levelled against God, not only compensative justice to the sinner, but justice to *himself*, requires that God should punish sin with infinite punishment. Sin casts contempt on the majesty and greatness of God. The language of it is, that he is a being not worthy to be honoured or feared; not so great, that his displeasure is worthy to be dreaded; and that his threatenings of wrath are despicable. Now, the proper vindication or defence of God's majesty in such a case is, for God to contradict this language in his providence towards sin that speaks it, or to contradict the language of sin in the event and fruit of sin. Sin says, God is a being not worthy that the sinner should fear him; and so affronts him without fear. The proper vindication of God's majesty from this is, for God to shew, by the event, that he is an infinitely fearful and terrible being. The language of sin is, that God's displeasure is not worthy that the sinner should regard it. The proper vindication of God from this language is, to show, by the experience of the event, the infinite dreadfulness of that slighted displeasure. In such a case, the majesty of God requires this vindication. It cannot be properly vindicated without it, neither can God be just to *himself* without this vindication; unless there could be such a thing as a repentance, humiliation, and sorrow, proportionable to the greatness of the majesty despised. When the majesty of God has such contempt cast upon it, and is trodden down in the dust by vile sinners, it is not fit that this infinite and glorious majesty should be left under this contempt; but that it

should be vindicated by something opposite to the contempt, which is equivalent to it, or of weight sufficient to balance it; either an equivalent punishment, or an equivalent sorrow and repentance. So that sin must be punished with an infinite punishment.

§ 8. There is a necessity of sin's being punished with a condign punishment, from the law of God that threatens such punishment. All but Epicureans will own, that all moral agents, are subjects of God's moral government: and that therefore he has given a law to his creatures. But if God has given a law to his creatures, that law must have sanctions, *i. e.* it must be enforced with threatenings of punishment: otherwise it fails of having the nature of a law, and is only of the nature of counsel or advice; or rather of a request. For one being to express his inclination or will to another, concerning any thing he would receive from him, any love or respect, without any threatening annexed, but leaving it with the person applied to, whether he will grant it or not, supposing that his refusal will be with impunity; is properly of the nature of a request. It does not amount to counsel or advice; because, when we give counsel to others, it is for their interest. But when we express our desire or will of something we would receive from them, with impunity to them whether they grant it or not, this is more properly requesting than counselling. No doubt it falls far short of the nature of law-giving. For such an expression of one's will as this, is an expression of will, without any expression of authority. It holds forth no authority, for us merely to manifest our wills or inclinations to another; nor indeed does it exhibit any authority over a person applied to, to promise him rewards. So persons may, and often do promise rewards to others, for doing those things that they have no power to oblige them to. So may persons do to their equals: So may a king do to others who are not his subjects. This is rather bargaining with others, than giving them laws. That expression of will only is a law, which is exhibited in such a manner as to express the lawgiver's power over the person to whom it is manifested, expressing his power of disposal of him, according as he complies or refuses; that which shews power over him, so as to oblige him to comply, or to make it be to his cost if he refuses.

§ 9. For the same reason that it is necessary the divine law should have a threatening of condign punishment annexed,

it is also necessary that the threatening should be fulfilled. For the threatening wholly relates to the execution. If it had no connexion with execution, it would be wholly void, and would be as no threatening : and so far as there is not a connexion with execution, whether that be in a greater or lesser degree ; so far and in such a degree is it void, and so far approaches to the nature of no threatening, as much as if that degree of unconnexion was expressed in the threatening. As for instance, if sin fails of threatened punishment half the times, this makes void the threatening in one half of it, and brings it down to be no more than if the threatening had expressed only so much, that sin should be punished half the times that it is committed. But if it be needful that all sin in every act should be forbidden by law, i. e. with a prohibition and threatening of condign punishment annexed, and that the threatening of sin with condign punishment should be universal ; then it is necessary that it should be universally executed. A threatening of an omniscient and true being can be supposed to signify no more punishment than is intended to be executed, and is not necessarily to be understood of any more. A threatening, if it signifies any thing, is a signification of some connexion betwixt the crime and the punishment. But the threatening of an omniscient being, cannot be understood to signify any more connexion with punishment than there is.

§ 10. If it be needful that there should be a divine law, it is needful that this divine law should be maintained in the nature, life, authority and strength that is proper to it as a law. The nature, life, authority and strength of every law, consists in its sanction, by which the deed is connected with the compensation ; and therefore depends on the strength and firmness of that connexion. In proportion as that connexion is weak, in such proportion does the law lose its strength, and fails of the proper nature and power of a law, and degenerates towards the nature of requests and expressions of will and desire to receive love and respect, without being enforced with authority. Dispensing with the law by the lawgiver, so as not to fulfil or execute it, in its nature does not differ from an abrogation of it, unless the law contains in itself such a clause, that it shall or may be dispensed with, and not fulfilled in certain cases, or when the lawgiver pleases. But this would be a contradiction. For, if the law contained such a clause ; then, not

to fulfil it, would be according to the law, and a fulfilment of the law ; and therefore there would be no dispensing with the law in it, because it is doing what the law itself directs to. The law may contain clauses of exception, wherein particular cases may be excepted from general rules ; but it cannot make provision for a dispensation. And therefore, for the lawgiver to dispense with it, is indeed to abrogate it. Though it may not be an abrogating it wholly, yet it is in some measure changing it. To dispense with the law, in not fulfilling it on him that breaks it, is making the rule give place to the sinner. But certainly it is an indecent thing, that sin, which provokes the execution, should procure the abrogation of the law. The necessity of fulfilling the law, in the sense mentioned, appears from Matt. v. 18. "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, until all be fulfilled." The words will allow of no other tolerable sense.

§ 11. It is necessary that the law of God should be maintained and executed, and not dispensed with or abrogated for the sake of the sinner, for the following reasons :

The *nature* and being of the law requires it. For, as has been already shewn, by such dispensation it loses the life and authority of a law, as it respects the subject. But it does not only fail of being a law in this respect ; it fails of being a rule to the Supreme Judge. The law is the great rule of righteousness and decorum, that the Supreme and Universal Rector has established and published, for the regulation of things in the commonwealth of the universality of intelligent beings and moral agents ; a rule, by which things are not only to be regulated between one subject and another, but between the king and subjects ; that it may be a rule of judgment to the one, as well as a rule of duty to the other. It is but reasonable to suppose, that such a rule should be established and published for the benefit of all that belong to this universal commonwealth, to be a rule to direct both their actions towards each other, and their expectations from each other, that they may have a fixed and known rule by which they are to act and to be dealt with, to be both active and passive as members of this commonwealth. The subject is most nearly concerned, not only in the measure of his own actions, but also in the consequences of them, or the method of his judge's determinations concerning him. None that own the existence of a divine law, with threatenings annexed, can deny that there

actually is such a rule as this, that relates both to the manner of the creature's acting, and also the judge's acting toward him as subject to that law. For none will deny, that the precepts relate to the manner of the subject's acting, and that the threatenings relate to the manner of the judge's proceeding with the subject, in consequence of his obedience or disobedience. It is needful that this great rule for managing affairs in this universal commonwealth, should be fixed and settled, and not be vague and uncertain. So far as it fails of this, it ceases to be of the nature of a rule. For it is essential to the nature of a rule, that it be something fixed. But if it be needful that it be something fixed, then it is needful that the author, and he by whom it subsists, should maintain and fulfil it, and not depart from it; because that is in a measure to disannul it. If he doth so, therein the rule becomes unfixed, and it so far ceases to be a rule to the judge.

§ 12. That the law should be made to give place to the sinner, is contrary to the direct *design* of the law. For the law was made, that the subject should be regulated by it, and give place to it; and not to be regulated by the subject, and to give place to him, especially to a wicked, vile, rebellious subject. The law is made, that it might prevent sin, and cause it not to be; and not that sin should disannul the law and cause it not to be. Therefore it would be very indecent for the Supreme Rector to cause this great rule to give place to the rebellion of the sinner.

§ 13. It is in nowise fit that this great rule should be abrogated and give place to the opposition and violation of the rebellious subject, on account of the *perfection* of the law, and as it is an expression of the perfection of the lawgiver. The holiness, and rectitude, and goodness of this great rule, which the Supreme Lawgiver has established for the regulation of the commonwealth of moral agents, and its universal fitness, wisdom, and absolute perfection, render a partial abrogation, for the sake of them that dislike it, and will not submit to it, needless and unseemly. If the great rule should be set aside, for the sake of the rebel, it would carry too much of the face of acknowledgment, in the lawgiver, of want of wisdom and foresight, or of some defect, in point of holiness or righteousness, in his law. He that breaks the law, finds fault with it, and casts that reflection on it, that it is not a good

law; and if God should in part abrogate the law upon this, it would have too much the appearance of a conceding to the sinner's objection against it. But God will magnify his law, and make it honourable, and will give no occasion for any such reflections upon it, nor leave the law under such a reflection. If this great rule of righteousness be so excellent and good a law, it is not only unfit that it should give place to rebellion, as this would be a dishonour to the excellency of the law and lawgiver; but also a wrong to the public good, of which the Supreme Rector of the world has the care, and is the guardian. If the rule be perfect, perfectly right and just and holy, and with infinite wisdom adapted to the good of the whole; then the public good requires that it be strongly established. The more firmly it is settled, and the more strongly it is guarded and defended, the better and the more it is for the public good; and every thing by which it is weakened, is a damage and loss to the commonwealth of beings. But I have already shown how every departure from it, weakens it, unfixes it, and causes it to fail of the nature of a settled rule, and in some measure disannuls it.

§ 14. The sacredness of the *authority* of the Divine Lawgiver requires, that he should maintain and fulfil his law, when it is violated by a rebellious subject. I have before spoken of the greatness and majesty of his *Being*, how that is concerned in it—I now would consider the sacredness of his authority, as he stands related to his creatures as their Lawgiver. The majesty of a ruler consists very much in that which appears in him; that tends to strike the subject with reverence and awe, and dread of contempt of him, or rebellion against him: And it is fit that this awe and dread should be in proportion to the greatness and dignity of the ruler, and the degree of authority with which he is vested. But this awe and dread is by an apprehension of the terribleness of the consequences of that contempt and rebellion, and the degree of the danger of those terrible consequences, or the degree of connexion of that rebellion with those consequences: Therefore, if it be meet that this awe or this apprehension should be in proportion to the greatness and dignity of the ruler, then it is fit that the consequences of contempt of the Supreme Ruler of the world should be infinitely terrible, and the danger that it brings of punishment, or connexion that it has with it, be strong and certain, and consequently, that the threatenings which enforce his laws should be sure and

inviolable. It is fit the authority of a ruler should be sacred proportionably to the greatness of that authority, *i. e.* in proportion to the greatness of the ruler, and his worthiness of honour and obedience, and the height of his exaltation above us, and the absoluteness of his dominion over us, and the strength of his right to our submission and obedience. But the sacredness of the authority of a sovereign consists in the strength of the enforcement of it, and guard that is about it, *i. e.* in the consequences of the violation to him that is guilty, and the degree of danger of these consequences. For the authority of a ruler does not consist in the power or influence he has on another by attractives, but coercives. The fence that is about the authority of a prince, that guards it as sacred, is the connexion there is between the violations of it, and the terrible consequences; or, in other words, in the strength or sureness of the threatening. Therefore, if this connexion be partly broken, the fence is partly broken: in proportion as the threatenings are weak, the guard is weak. But certainly it is fit that the authority of the infinitely great and absolute Lord of heaven and earth should be infinitely sacred, and should be kept so with an infinitely strong guard, and a fence without any breach in it. And it is not becoming the sacredness of the majesty and authority of the great *παντοκράτωρ*, that that perfectly holy, just, and infinitely wise and good law, which he has established as the great rule for the regulation of all things in the universal commonwealth of beings, should be set aside, to give place to the infinitely unreasonable and vile opposition that sinners make to it, and their horrid and daring rebellion against it.

§ 15. The *truth* of the lawgiver makes it necessary that the threatening of the law should be fulfilled in every punctilio. The threatening of the law is absolute: Thou shalt surely die. It is true, the obligation does not lie in the claim of the person threatened, as it is in promises: for it is not to be supposed, that the person threatened will claim the punishment threatened. And, indeed, if we look upon things strictly, those seem to reckon the wrong way, who suppose the necessity of the execution to arise from an obligation on God in executing, properly consequent on his threatening. For the necessity of the connexion of the execution with the threatening, seems to arise directly the other way, *viz.* from the obligation that was on the omniscient God in threatening, consequent on the futurity of the execution. Though, strictly

speaking, he is not obliged to execute because he has threatened, yet he was obliged not absolutely to threaten, if he at the same time knew that he should not and would not execute; because this would not have been consistent with his truth. So that, from the truth of God, there is an inviolable connexion between absolute threatening and execution; not so properly from an obligation on God to conform the execution to the past absolute threatening, as from his obligation to confirm his absolute threatening to the future execution. This God was absolutely obliged to do, as he would speak the truth. For if God absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew would come to pass, then he absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew to be truth. And how any can speak contrary to what they know to be the truth, in declaring, promising, or threatening, or any other way, consistently with perfect and inviolable truth, I cannot conceive. Threatenings are significations of something; and, if they are made consistent with truth, or are true significations of any thing, they are significations of that which is true. If absolute threatenings are significations of any thing, they are significations of the futurity of the thing threatened. But if the futurity of the thing threatened is not true, then how can the threatenings be true significations? And if God, in them, speaks contrary to what he knows, and contrary to what he intends; how can he speak true, is to me inconceivable.

§ 16. It is with absolute threatenings, as it is with predictions. When God has foretold something that shall come to pass hereafter, which does not concern our interest, and so is of the nature neither of a promise nor threatening, there is a necessary connexion betwixt the prediction and the fulfilment, but not by virtue of any claim we have to make; and so not properly by virtue of any obligation to fulfil, consequent on the prediction, but by virtue of an obligation on an omniscient Being in predicting, consequent on what he knew he would fulfil; an obligation to conform the prediction to the future event. It is as much against the veracity of God, absolutely to threaten what he knows he will not accomplish, as to predict what he knows he will not accomplish; for to do either, would be to declare, that something will be, which he at the same time does not intend shall be. Absolute threatenings are a sort of predictions. God in them foretels or declares what shall come to pass. They do not differ from mere predictions, in the nature of the declaration or foretelling;

but partly, in the thing declared or foretold, being an evil to come upon us—a mere prediction being of a thing indifferent—and partly, in the end of foretelling. In a threatening, the end of foretelling is to deter us from sinning; and predictions of things indifferent are for some other end. Absolute threatenings are God's declaration of something future; and the truth of God does as much oblige him to keep the truth in declarations of what is future, as of what is past or present. For things past, present and future, are all alike before God—all alike in his view. And when God declares to others what he sees himself, he is equally obliged to truth, whether the thing declared be past, present, or to come. And, indeed, there is no need of the distinction between present truth and future, in this case. For if any of God's absolute threatenings are not to be fulfilled, those threatenings are declarations or revelations contrary to future truth. But such a threatening is a revelation of the futurity of a punishment. That futurity is now present with God, when he threatens: present in his mind, his knowledge. And if he signifies that a thing is future, which he knows not to be future; then the signification he gives is contrary to present truth, even contrary to what God now knows is future.—Again, an absolute threatening is a signification of the present intention of him that threatens: and therefore, if he threatens what he does not intend to fulfil, then he signifies an intention to be, which is not; and so the threatening is contrary to present truth. God's absolute threatenings are a revelation to his subjects, of the appointed measures of their Judge's proceeding with respect to their breaches of his law; and if they do not reveal what is indeed the intended method of the Judge's proceeding, then it is not a true revelation.

§ 17. There is a necessity of the fulfilment of God's absolute promises both ways; viz. both by an obligation on God to foretel or declare, or foredeclare, the future benefit, according to what he foresaw would be, and he intended should be; and also by an obligation on him to fulfil his promise consequent on his predicting, and by virtue of the claim of the person to whom the promise was made. And there is also an obligation on God to fulfil his absolute threatenings consequent on his threatenings, *indirectly*, by virtue of many ill and undesirable consequences of the event being, beside the certain dependence or certain expectations raised by God's threatenings, in the persons threatened, and others that

are spectators ; of which consequences God may be obliged not to be a cause. But threatenings do not properly bring an obligation on God, that is consequent on them as threatenings, as it is with promises. As to those threatenings that are not positive or absolute, they are not necessarily followed with the punishment mentioned in them, because the possibility of escaping the punishment is either expressed or understood in the threatening. But the divine truth makes it necessary that there should be a certain connexion between them, that as much punishment be inflicted as is signified by them. If certain suffering be not signified by them, then there is no necessary connexion between them and certain suffering, according to God's ordinary method of dealing with men, and that, therefore, they, as they would act rationally, have great reason to fear it, seeing that God does not see cause to reveal what he will do to them : if this be all that is really contained and understood in the threatening, then this is all that the threatening is connected with. Or, if the proper meaning of the threatening be, that such suffering shall come, unless they repent, and this be all that can be fairly understood, then the truth of God makes no more necessary. But God's truth makes a necessary connexion between every threatening and every promise, and all that is properly signified in that threatening or promise.

§ 18. The satisfaction of Christ by his death is certainly a very rational thing. If any person greatly obliged to me, who was dependent on me, and whom I loved, should exceedingly abuse me, and should go on in an obstinate course of it from one year to another, notwithstanding all I could say to him, and all new obligations continually repeated ; though at length he should leave it off, I should not forgive him, unless upon gospel considerations. But if any person that was a much dearer friend to me, and one that had always been true to me, and constant to the utmost, and that was a very near relation of him that offended me, should intercede for him, and, out of the entire love he had to him, should put himself to very hard labours and difficulties, and undergo great pains and miseries to procure him forgiveness ; and the person that had offended should, with a changed mind, fly to this mediator, and should seek favour in his name, with a sense in his own mind how much his mediator had done and suffered for him ; I should be satisfied, and feel myself inclined, without any difficulty, to receive him into my entire friendship again ; but not without

the last mentioned condition, that he should be sensible how much his mediator had done and suffered. For if he was ignorant of it, or thought he had done only some small matter, I should not be easy nor satisfied. So a sense of Christ's sufficiency seems necessary in faith. Abigail, when mediating between David and Nabal, when the former was provoked to wrath against the latter, and had determined to destroy him, 1 Sam. xxv. 24. Fell at David's feet and said, Upon me let this iniquity be, and let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thy audience, and hear the voice of thy handmaid." "And in verse 28. she calls Nabal's iniquity her iniquity." By this it appears, that a mediator putting himself in the stead of the offender, so that the offended party should impute the offence to him, and look on the mediator as having taken it upon him, looking on him as the debtor for what satisfaction should be required and expected, was in those days no strange notion, or considered as a thing in itself absurd and inconsistent with men's natural notion of things.

§ 19. Christ is often represented as bearing our sins for us: Isaiah liii. 4. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Verse 11. "For he shall bear their iniquities." Verse 12. "He bare the sin of many." And with an evident reference to this last place, the apostle says, Heb. ix. 28. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and to them that look for him, he shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." And with a plain reference to verses, 4, 5, of this liii. chapter of Isaiah, the apostle Peter says, 1 Pet. ii. 24. "Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

The word translated here in Isaiah liii. 4. and 12. is נָשָׂא; the same word, and the same phrase, of bearing sin and bearing iniquity, is often used concerning things which are the types of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice, viz. the Levitical priests and sacrifices. It was no uncommon phrase, but usual, and well understood among the Jews; and we find it very often used in other cases, and applied to others besides either Christ or the types of him. And when it is so, it is plain, that the general meaning of the phrase is lying under the guilt of sin, having it imputed and charged upon the person, as obnoxious to the punishment of it, or obliged to answer and make satisfaction for it; or liable to the calamities and miseries to which it exposes. In such a manner it seems always to be used,

unless in some few places it signifies to take away sin by forgiveness. See *Dr Owen* on Heb. ix. 28. and *Pool's Synopsis* on Isaiah liii. And, concerning their laying their hands on the head of the sacrifice, see also *Pool's Synopsis* on Levit. i. 4.

§ 20. *By merit*, I mean any thing whatsoever in any person or belonging to him, which appearing in the view of another is a recommendation of him to that other's regard, esteem or affection. I do not at present take into consideration, whether that which thus recommends be real merit, or something that truly, according to the nature of things, is worthy to induce esteem, &c. but only what actually recommends and appears worthy in the eye of him to whom it recommends the other; which is the case of every thing that is actually the ground of respect or affection in one towards another, whether the ground be real worth, or only agreement in temper, benefits received, near relation, long acquaintance, &c. Whatever it be that is by the respecting person viewed in the person respected, that actually has influence, and is effectual to recommend to respect, is *merit* or worthiness of respect or fitness for it in his eyes.

By *patron*, I mean a person of superior dignity or merit, that stands for and espouses the interest of another, interposes between him and a third person or party, in that capacity to maintain, secure, or promote the interest of that other, by his influence with the third person, improving his merit with him, or interest in his esteem and regard for that end. And by *client*, I mean that other person whose interest the patron thus espouses, and in this manner endeavours to maintain and promote.

§ 21. Having explained how I use these *terms*, I would now observe the following things.

1. It is not unreasonable, or without foundation in the reason and nature of things, that respect should be shewn to one on account of his relation to, or union and connexion with another: or, that a person should be thought the proper object of regard, viewed in that relation or connexion, of which he is not the proper object himself, singly and separately: or, which is still the same thing, that a person should be thought worthy of respect on the account of the *merit* of the other person to whom he stands related, taking the word here as it has been explained.

2. Whenever one is thus viewed, as having a merit of respect on the account of another to whom he stands related, the merit of the other person is *imputed* to him; and these persons so far are substituted the one in the place of the other. This is plain: for the person now accepted, has not that merit in himself considered alone, but only as related to another that has merit in himself, and so is respected for the sake of the merit of that other; which is the very same thing as, in our consideration, *transferring* that merit from the other person to him, and viewing it in him as his merit, a merit whose recommending influence becomes his in some degree; so that in all such cases there is an imputation and substitution in some degree. The recommending influence of the one, becomes the recommending influence of the other, or influence that prevails to recommend the other; which is the same thing. Thus it is, when any one respects a near *relation*, or the child or spouse of a *friend*, that is very dear and greatly esteemed for such a friend's sake, or shews the relative or friend greater regard, seeks his welfare more, and shews him more kindness than he would do if he were viewed out of such a relation or connexion, and entirely by himself. Thus it is reasonable and natural, that one should be respected for the merit of another, and so his merit be in some degree imputed to another, and one person be substituted for another, according to the natural sense of all mankind.

3. As it is the *relation* of one to another, or his *union* with him, that is the ground of respect shown him for the other's sake—and so the ground of substitution of the other in his stead, and of the imputation of the other's merit in some degree—as has been observed; so it is manifest, that the *greater* or nearer that relation is, and the stricter the union, so much the more does it prevail for the acceptance of the person, or the object of respect, for the sake of him to whom he is united.

4. If there be any such thing as an union of one person to another, as, for instance, a patron to a client, in such degree or manner as that on such account it shall be peculiarly fit to look upon them as completely one and the same, as to all that concerns the interest of the client, with relation to the regard of the friend of the patron; then especially may the patron be taken by his friend as the substitute of the client, and his merit be imputed to him.

§ 22. If it be inquired, what degree or manner of *union*

may be looked upon as complete? I answer, When the patron's heart is so united to the client, that when the latter is to be destroyed, he, from love, is willing to take his destruction on himself, or what is equivalent thereto, so that the client may escape; then he may be properly accepted as perfectly one with regard to the interest of the client; for this reason, that his love is such as thoroughly puts him into the place of the client in all that concerns his interest. His love actually puts him in the room of the beloved, in that suffering or calamity which, being his total destruction, swallows up and consumes all his interest, without leaving the least part of it. Therefore, love that will take that destruction, evidently takes in his whole interest. It appears to be an equal balance for it. His love puts him thoroughly in his client's stead. If his love were such as made him willing to put himself in the other's stead, in many cases where his interest was concerned, but yet not in a case where *all* is concerned, the union is not complete; he is partially, and not thoroughly, united. But when the love of the patron is such as to go through with the matter, and makes him willing to put himself in the other's stead, even in the case of the last extremity—and where the beloved is to be utterly and perfectly destroyed—then he is, as to his love, sufficiently united, so as to be accepted as completely one by his friend, in all that concerns the client's welfare.

§ 23. Especially is the client's welfare properly and naturally regarded, for the sake of the patron that is very dear and worthy in the eyes of any person, when the way in which the patron expresses his desire of the client's welfare, is by suffering and being at expence of his own personal and private welfare in any degree, for the welfare of the client. Expending one's good or interest for another, is properly transferring the interest in the good expended, into the good sought: the expended good, which is the means, is properly set aside and removed, in the regard of him that is at the expence, and whose regard is placed on that good which is the end. The good of the price is parted with, for the good of the thing purchased; and therefore, here is a proper substitution of one in the place of the other. In such a case, therefore, in a more special manner, will it be proper and natural for one in whose eyes the patron is *very worthy*, and to whom he is *very dear*, to have regard to the welfare of the client for the patron's sake, or for the sake of the patron's merit: as, suppose the client of the excellent and dear patron be a child or spouse in

captivity, and the patron lays out himself exceedingly for the client's redemption, and goes through many and very great hardships, and is at vast expence for obtaining it.

§ 24. If the patron who seeks the welfare of the client, particularly and directly applies himself to the person who has so high an esteem and affection for him, expressing his desires of the client's welfare, and that what is expended for his sake be given to him; then especially is it natural that the person of whom his client's welfare is sought, should be ready to grant it for his sake, and it is still more highly proper and natural to regard the client's welfare on account of the patron's *merit*, or to reckon the merit of the patron to his client's account; if the merit of the patron consists, or especially appears in what he does for his client's welfare; or if the virtues and worthy qualities have their chief exercise, and do chiefly exhibit their amiableness in those excellent and amiable acts which he performs in seeking the good of the client. In this case, it is peculiarly natural to accept the client, on the account of the merit of the patron; for the merit is on his account, and has its existence for the sake of the client. More especially is it natural, when his merit, above all, consists and appears in the very expence of his own welfare, for the welfare of the client, or in the act of expending or exchanging the one for the other. For, as was observed before, such expence is properly regarded as a price of the client's welfare; but when such merit is added to the price, this merit becomes the worth, value or preciousness of the price; preciousness of another kind, besides merely the value of the natural good parted with. It adds a moral good to the price, equal to the natural good expended; so that the worthiness of the patron, and the value expended are offered both together in one, as the price of the welfare of the client. The thus accepting of the patron's merit, as being placed to the account of the client, will be more natural still, if the patron puts himself in the place of that client, undertaking to appear for him, to represent him, and act in his stead, by an exceeding great change in his circumstances clothes himself with the form of his client, goes where he is, takes his place in the universe, puts himself into his circumstances, and is in all things made like unto him, wherein this may be consistent with maintaining his merit inviolable. If the client be unworthy, and an offender, and has deserved ill of the person whose favour he needs, then abating and dismissing resentment, or lessening or withholding the

evil deserved, for the sake of the merit of the patron, is equivalent to a positive favour for his sake, in case of no offence and demerit of punishment.

§ 25. If the person that needs favour be an offender and unworthy, then, in order to a proper influence and effect of the union and merit of a patron; to induce his friend to receive him into favour on his account, the union of the patron with his client, and his undertaking and appearing as his patron to seek favour for him, should be in such a manner, and attended with such circumstances, as not to diminish his merit, *i. e.* so as that his union with, and intercession for the client, shall not in the least infringe on these two things, *viz.* the patron's own union with his friend, whose favour he seeks for the client, and his merit strictly so called, *i. e.* his own virtue. For if his own worthiness be diminished, by his union with one that is unworthy, then his influence to recommend the client one way, is destroyed one way, at the same time that it is established another. For that recommending influence consists in these two things, *viz.* his merit, and his union with the client. Therefore, if one of these is diminished or destroyed, as the other is advanced and established; nothing is done on the whole toward recommending the client. Therefore, in order that, on the whole, the client be effectually recommended, it is necessary that the patron's union to an offending unworthy client should be attended with such circumstance, that it shall not be at all inconsistent with these two things, his regard to his friend, and his regard to virtue and holiness: for in these two things consists his merit in the eye of his friend; and therefore it is necessary, that his appearing united to his unworthy and offending client should be with such circumstances as most plainly to demonstrate, that he perfectly disapproves of his offence, and unworthiness, and to shew a perfect regard to virtue, and to the honour and dignity of his offended injured friend. There is no way that this can be so thoroughly and fully done, as by undertaking himself to pay the debt to the honour and rights of his injured friend, and to honour the rule of virtue and righteousness the client has violated, by putting himself in the stead of the offender, into subjection to the injured rights and violated authority of his offended friend, and under the violated law and rule of righteousness belonging to one in the client's state; and so, for the sake of the honour of his friend's authority, and the honour of the rule of righteousness, suffering the whole penalty due to

the offender, and which would have been requisite to be suffered by him, for the maintaining the honour and dignity of those things; and himself, by such great condescension, and under such self-denial, honouring those rights and rules by his obedience and perfect conformity to them; hereby giving the most evident testimony to all beholders, that although he loves his client and seeks his welfare, yet he had rather be humbled so low, deny himself so greatly, and suffer so much, than that his welfare should be in the least diminished, his authority weakened, and his honour and his dignity degraded.

§ 26. If the patron be, in the eyes of him whose favour is sought, of very great dignity, it is agreeable to reason and nature that this should have influence to procure greater favour to the client than if he were of less dignity. And when it is inquired, whether there be a sufficiency in the patron and his relation to his client, to answer to such a degree of favour as is proposed to be attained for him; the dignity of the patron is one thing that is to be estimated and put into the scales, with the degree of favour sought, in order to know whether it be sufficient to countervail it. By dignity, I here intend, not only the degree of virtue and relation to his friend, of whom he seeks favour, but the greatness of the person of the patron.

If, in adjusting this matter, the dignity that is viewed in the patron and his friend's regard to him, be so great, that, considered with the degree of the patron's union with his client, there is a sufficiency to countervail all the favour that the client needs, or the utmost that he is capable of receiving, then there is a perfect sufficiency in the patron for the client, or a sufficiency completely to answer and support the whole interest of the client; or a sufficiency in his friend's regard to the patron, wholly to receive, take in, and comprehend the client, with regard to his whole interest, or all that pertains to his welfare; or, which is the same thing, a sufficiency fully to answer for him as his representative and substitute, in all that pertains to his welfare.

§ 27. If the patron and client are equals as to greatness of being or degree of existence, and the degree of the patron's union with his client should be such (and that were possible) that he regarded the interest of the client equally with his own personal interest; then it would be natural for the patron's friend to regard the client's welfare for the sake of the

patron, as much as he regards the patron's own personal welfare : because, when the case is so, the patron is as strictly united to the client as he is to himself, and his client's welfare becomes perfectly, and to all intents and purposes, his own interests, as much as his personal welfare ; and therefore, as the love of his friend to him disposes him to regard whatever is his interest, to such a degree as it is his interest ; so it must dispose him to regard the client's welfare in an equal degree with his own personal interest ; because, by the supposition, it is his interest in an equal degree. But this must be here provided or supposed, viz. not only that so strict an union of the patron and client be possible, but also that it be proper, or that there be no impropriety or unfitness in it : because, if it be unfit, then the patron's being so strictly united to him, diminishes his merit ; because merit, at least in part, consists in a regard to what is proper and fit ; and if the degree of union be unfit, it diminishes the influence of that union to recommend the client one way, as much as it increases it another. But if the patron and client are not equals, but the patron be greater and vastly superior as to rank and degree of existence, it gives greater weight to his union, as to its influence with the friend of the patron, to recommend the client ; so that a less degree of union of the patron with the client may be equivalent to a greater union, in case of equality. Therefore, in this case, though the union be not so great as that his regard to the client's interest should be equal with his own personal interest, but may be much less, yet his regard to it may be such, that its recommending influence may be equivalent to that which is fully equal in the case of equality of persons ; and therefore may be sufficient to answer the same purposes towards the client, and consequently to be perfectly sufficient for the client, with regard to the client's whole interest. From these things, we may gather this as a rule whereby to judge, whether there be a sufficiency in the patron's union with his client, to answer for the whole interest of the client with the patron's friend, with respect to the degree of union of the patron, and the degree of greatness, where there is no defect of merit in other respects, viz. that the patron's union with the client shall be such, that considering jointly both the degree of greatness, and degree of union, the patron's union with his client shall be as considerable and weighty, and have as much recommending influence, as if, in case of equality of the patron with his client, the union between them was so great, that the patron's regard to

the welfare of the client were equal to his own.—Then the union of the patron has its measure and proportion according to the rule now mentioned, and so is sufficient to answer his whole interest; when the degree of his regard to his client's interest stands in the same proportion to his regard to his own personal interest, as the degree of the capacity of the client stands in to the degree of his own capacity; for the degrees of capacity are as the greatness or the degrees of existence of the person.

§ 28. When the patron's regard to his client is thus proportioned, that is, when he regards the client's interest as his own, according to the client's capacity, then such an union may most fitly and aptly be represented, by the client's being taken by the patron to be as a part or member of himself, as though he were a member of his body. For men love each part of themselves as themselves, but yet not each part equally with themselves; but each part as themselves, according to the measure of the capacity of the part. A man loves his little finger as himself, but not equally with the head; but yet with the same love he bears to himself, according to the place, measure and capacity of the little finger. The most proper and plain trial and demonstration of this sufficiency of union of the patron with the client, consisting in such a proportion of regard to his welfare as has been mentioned, is the patron's being willing to bear sufferings for the client, or in his stead, that are equivalent to sufferings which properly belong to the latter; which equivalence of sufferings must be determined by a joint estimation of these two things, viz. the degree of suffering, and the greatness of the sufferer. When the effect of the patron's love to the client is a suffering for the client that is equal in value or weight to the client's suffering, considering the difference of the degree of persons; it shows, that the love to the client, which is the cause of this suffering, is also equal or equivalent to his love for himself, according to the different degree of the persons.

The most proper and clear trial of the measure of love or regard to the interest of another, is the measure of suffering, or expence of personal interest, for the interest of the beloved. So much as the lover regards the welfare of the beloved, so much in value or weight of his own welfare, will he be willing to part with for it. If the value of the welfare

obtained, be, in the regard of the sufferer, fully equal to the value of the welfare parted with, then, there being an equal balance, no preponderation of self-love will hinder parting with one for the other. The love therefore is sufficient and equal to self-love, allowing only for the difference of capacity or greatness of the persons; as the sufferings are equal, allowing for the same difference of the degree of persons.

§ 29. There can be but one thing more requisite, according to the nature of things, in order to its being to all intents and purposes proper and suitable that the patron should be accepted as one with the client, in what pertains to the client's interest, and his merits being imputed to the client, and his having favour on the account of it; which is this, that seeing the client is an intelligent being, capable of act and choice, he should therefore actively and cordially concur in the affair; that the union between the patron and him should be mutual; that as the patron's heart is united to the client, so the client's heart should be united to the patron; that as there is that disposition and those acts appearing in the patron that are proper to the character and relation of a patron, in undertaking for the client to appear for him before his friend, as his representative, guardian, deliverer and saviour, and condescending to him to do and suffer all for him needed for his help and advancement; so there must also appear in the client those dispositions and acts that are proper to the character and relation of a client, cleaving to him, committing his cause to him, and trusting in him, in an entire approbation of the patron's friendship, kind undertaking and patronage; and not only an approbation of the patron's union to him, by which he avails for his being looked upon as one with him, but also of the patron's union to his friend, whose favour he seeks, which union with his friend avails to the acceptance of the patron; and also an entire approbation of the benefits which the patron seeks of his friend for the client; or, in one word, a cordial and entire faith of the client in his patron. When there is thus a mutual union between the patron and client, and an union throughout between them both, and the friend whose favour is sought, together with those things before mentioned, there is every thing requisite in order to the fitness of the acceptance of the client on the account of the patron, and his receiving such favour from the patron's friend, as is requisite to all that pertains to the client's welfare; so that such an acceptance and such

favour shall be in all respects proper, according to the nature of things, and common sense of intelligent beings, and of no evil or improper consequence.

§ 30. It was needful, that a Mediator between two parties distant and alienated one from the other, in order to be the middle person to unite them together, should himself be united to both. Otherwise he could not be a bond of union between them. And if he be a Mediator between God and guilty men, it was necessary that he should unite himself to them, or assume them as it were to himself. But if he unites himself to guilty creatures, he of necessity brings their guilt on himself. If he unites himself to them that are in debt, he brings their debt on himself. He cannot properly unite himself to a rebel against God, and one that is obnoxious to God's wrath, and is condemned to condign punishment, to be a Mediator to bring God to be at peace with him, without voluntarily taking his sufferings on himself; because otherwise his undertaking for, and uniting himself to such an one, will appear like countenancing his offence and rebellion. But if at the same time that he unites himself to him, he takes it upon himself to bear his penalty, it quite takes off all such appearance. He shews, that though he loves the rebel that has affronted the divine Majesty, yet he at the same time has the greatest possible abhorrence of the injury to God's majesty, and dishonour to his name, in that he regards the honour of God's majesty so much as to be willing to endure so extreme sufferings, that the divine glory and majesty may not be injured, but fully maintained.

§ 31. Christ suffered the wrath of God for men's sins in such a way as he was capable of, being an infinitely holy person, who knew that God was not angry with him personally, but infinitely loved him. The wicked in hell will suffer the wrath of God, as they will have the sense and knowledge, and sight of God's infinite displeasure towards them and hatred of them. But this was impossible in Jesus Christ. Christ therefore could bear the wrath of God in no other, but these two ways, viz. in having a great and *clear sight* of the infinite wrath of God against the sins of men, and the punishment they deserved; and in enduring the *effects* of that wrath. This it was most fit that he should have, at the time when he was suffering in their stead, and paying their ransom to deliver them from that wrath and punishment. That he

might know what he did, that he might act with full understanding at the time when he made expiation and paid a ransom for sinners to redeem them from hell. It was requisite that he should have a clear sight of the dreadful evil and *odiousness* of sin, and of the dreadfulness of the punishment from which he suffered to deliver them, otherwise he would not know how great a benefit he vouchsafed them in redeeming them from this punishment. Christ, doubtless, actually had a clear view of both those things in the time of his last suffering. Every thing in the circumstances of his last suffering concurred to give him a great and full sight of the hateful nature of the sin of man. For its odiousness and malignant nature never appeared so much in its own proper colours, as it did in that act of murdering the Son of God, and in exercising such contempt and cruelty towards him. Likewise, every thing in the circumstances of his last sufferings tended to give him a striking view of the dreadful punishment of sin. The sight of the evil of sin tended to this, and so did the enduring of temporal death, especially under such circumstances, with such extreme pain, God hiding his face, his dying a death that by God's appointment was an accursed death, having a sight of the malice and triumph of devils, and being forsaken of his friends, &c. As God ordered external circumstances to help forward this purpose; so there is all reason to think, that his own influences of Christ's mind were agreeable hereto, his spirit acting with his providence to give him a full view of those things. Now, the clear view of each of these must of necessity be inexpressibly terrible to the man Christ Jesus. His having so clear an actual view of sin and its hatefulness, was an idea infinitely disagreeable to the holy nature of Christ; and therefore, unless balanced with an equal sight of good that comes by this evil, must have been an immensely disagreeable sensation in Christ's soul, or, which is the same thing, immense suffering. But that equally clear idea of good, to counterbalance the evil of sin, was not given at that time; because God forsook Christ, and hid himself from him, and withheld comfortable influences, or the clear ideas of pleasant objects. Thus, Christ bare our sins; God laid on him the iniquities of us all, and he bare the burden of them; and so, his bearing the burden of our sins may be considered as something diverse from his suffering God's wrath. For his suffering wrath consisted more in the sense he had of the dreadfulness of the punishment of sin, or of God's wrath inflicted for it. Thus, Christ was

tormented not only in the fire of God's wrath, but in the fire of our sins; and our sins were his tormentors: the evil and malignant nature of sin, was what Christ endured immediately as well as more remotely, in bearing the consequences of it.

§ 32. Thus, Christ suffered that which the damned in hell do not suffer. For they do not see the hateful nature of sin. They have no idea of sin in itself, that is infinitely disagreeable to their nature, as the idea of sin was to Christ's holy nature; though conscience in them be awakened to behold the dreadful guilt and desert of sin. And as the clear view of sin in its hatefulness necessarily brought great suffering on the holy soul of Christ; so also did the view of its punishment. For both the evil of sin and the evil of punishment are infinite, and both infinitely disagreeable to Christ's nature: the former to his nature as God; the latter to his nature as man. Such is human nature, that a great and clear, and full idea of suffering, without some other pleasant and sweet idea fully to balance it, brings suffering; as appears from the nature of all spiritual ideas. They are repetitions (in a degree at least) of the things themselves of which they are ideas. Therefore, if Christ had had a perfectly clear and full idea of what the damned suffer in hell, the suffering he would have had in the mere presence of that idea, would have been perfectly equal to the thing itself, if there had been no idea in Christ in any degree to balance it; such as, some knowledge of the love of God, of a future reward, future salvation of his elect, &c. But pleasant ideas in this clearness being in a great measure withholden by reason of God's hiding his face; hence, the awful ideas of eternal death which his elect people deserved, and of the dismal wrath of God, of consequence filled the soul of Christ with an inexpressible gloom. Though Christ knew the love of God to him, and knew he should be successful in his sufferings; yet when God forsook him, those dismal views, those gloomy ideas so fixed and swallowed up his mind, that though he had the habitual knowledge of those other objects, yet he could not attend to them; he could have comparatively but little comfort and support from them; for they could afford support no farther than they were attended to, or were in actual view. Christ's great love and pity to the elect, was one source of his suffering. A strong exercise of love excites a lively idea of the object beloved. And a strong exercise of pity excites a lively idea of the misery under which he pities them. Christ's love then brought his elect infinitely near to him in

that great act and suffering wherein he especially stood for them, and was substituted in their stead : and his love and pity fixed the idea of them in his mind, as if he had really been they ; and fixed their calamity in his mind, as though it really was his. A very strong and lively love and pity toward the miserable, tends to make their case our's ; as in other respects, so in this in particular, as it doth in our idea place us in their stead, under their misery, with a most lively, feeling sense of that misery, as it were feeling it for them, actually suffering it in their stead by strong sympathy.

§ 33. Hence we may see how the same thing, the same ideas that distressed the soul of Christ and brought on his amazing sufferings, engaged him to go through them. It was ordered that the bitterness of the cup, though exceedingly dreadful, was of that nature, that the tasting of that bitterness was the thing that engaged him to go on to drink up the cup ; and that as the bitterness of it arose from the clear idea he had then given him of the infinitely hateful and dreadful nature of sin. The more lively this idea was, the more dreadful was it to the soul of Christ ; and yet, the more lively his idea of the hatefulness and dreadfulness of sin was, which consists in disobedience to God, the more did it engage him not to disobey that great command he had received of his Father, viz. That he should drink this cup, and go through those sufferings. The more he had a sense how dreadful it is to contemn the authority of God, and to dishonour his holy name ; the more would he be engaged to remove and abolish this dishonour, and to honour the authority of God. The more he had a sense of what an odious and dreadful thing sin was, the more would his heart be engaged to do and suffer what was necessary to take away this dreadful and odious thing, from those whom the Father had given him. It was the lively exercise of love and pity to those whom the Father had given him, that occasioned so lively a view of the punishment to which they had exposed themselves, whereby his soul was filled with dismay. But this lively love and pity at the same time engaged him to suffer for them, in order to deliver them from their deserved punishment. And as pity towards his elect excited a lively idea of their misery ; so, on the other hand, the increase of his idea of their misery excited strong exercises of pity, and this pity engaged him still to endure those sufferings in their stead.

§ 34. From what has been said, we may learn how Christ was sanctified in his last sufferings. The suffering of his soul in great part consisted in the great and dreadful sense and idea that he then had of the dreadful, horrid odiousness of sin; which was done by the Spirit of God. But this could not be, without a proportionable increase of his aversion to, and hatred of, sin; and consequently of his inclination to the contrary, which is the same thing as an increase of the holiness of his nature. Beside the immediate sight he had of the odious nature of sin, he had that strong sense, and that great experience of the bitter fruit and consequence of sin, to confirm his enmity to it. Moreover, he was then in the exercise of his highest act of obedience or holiness, which, tending to increase the principle, the bringing forth of such great and abundant fruit, tended to strengthen and increase the root. Those last sufferings of Christ, were in some respect like a fire to refine the gold. For, though the furnace purged away no dross, yet it increased the preciousness of the gold; it added to the finite holiness of the human nature of Christ. Hence Christ calls his offering himself up, his sanctifying himself; John xvii. 19. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Hence he calls those last sufferings a baptism that he was to be baptized with. It was a baptism to him in two respects, as it purged him from imputed guilt, and as it increased his holiness by the Spirit of God that gave him those terrible but sanctifying views. And so this is one way in which the Captain of our salvation is made perfect by sufferings: Heb. ii. 10. and v. 9. and Luke xiii. 32. Thus Christ, before he was glorified, was prepared for that high degree of glory and joy to which he was to be exalted, by being first sanctified in the furnace.

§ 35. Another way in which it was possible that Christ should endure the wrath of God was, to endure the *effects* of that wrath. All that he suffered was by the special ordering of God. There was a very visible hand of God in letting men and devils loose upon him at such a rate, and in separating from him his own disciples. Thus it pleased the Father to bruise him and put him to grief. God dealt with him as if he had been exceedingly angry with him, and as though he had been the object of his dreadful wrath. This made all the sufferings of Christ the more terrible to him, because they were from the hand of his Father, whom he infinitely loved, and of whose infinite love he had had eternal experience. Besides, it was an

effect of God's wrath, that he forsook Christ. This caused Christ to cry out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This was infinitely terrible. Christ's knowledge of the glory of the Father, and his love to the Father, and the sense and experience he had had of the worth of the Father's love to him, made the withholding the pleasant ideas and manifestations of his Father's love, as terrible to him, as the sense and knowledge of his hatred is to the damned, that have no knowledge of God's excellency, no love to him, nor any experience of the infinite sweetness of his love. It was a special fruit of the wrath of God against our sins, that he let loose upon Christ the Devil, who has the power of death, is God's executioner, and the roaring lion that devours the damned in hell. Christ was given up to the Devil as his captive for a season. This antitype of Jonah was thrown to this great Leviathan, to be swallowed up as his prey. The time of Christ's suffering, was the time of the prevalency of the power of the Devil, wherein Christ was delivered up to that power, as is implied in Luke xxii. 53. "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me : but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." And therefore, when his last sufferings were approaching, Christ said, John xiv. 30. "The Prince of this world cometh." He was let loose to torment the soul of Christ with gloomy and dismal ideas. He probably did his utmost to contribute to raise his ideas of the torments of hell.

§ 36. That God should all along require *sacrifices* in his Church, and that something should be done, by all that worshipped him, to make *atonement* for their sins. Sacrificing obtained throughout the world, in all nations and ages ; and, that such a multitude of sacrifices should be appointed ; that sacrifices should be offered so continually, and on so many occasions, and joined with all their public worship ; was a plain testimony of God, that a real atonement or satisfaction to his justice was necessary, and that God did not design, in his manner of dealing with mankind, that men should be pardoned and accepted without atonement. And if there was nothing of true and real atonement and sacrifice, in those beasts that were offered, then doubtless they were an evidence, that there was to be some *other* greater sacrifice, which was to be a proper atonement or satisfaction, and of which they were only the presage and signs ; as those symbolical actions which God sometimes commanded the prophets to perform, were signs

and presages of great events which they foretold. This proves that a sacrifice of infinite value was necessary, and that God would accept of no other. For an atonement that bears no proportion to the offence, is no atonement. An atonement carries in it a payment or satisfaction in the very notion of it. And if satisfaction was so little necessary, that the divine Majesty easily admitted one that bears no proportion at all to the offence, *i. e.* was wholly equivalent to nothing, when compared with the offence, and so was no payment or satisfaction at all; then he might have forgiven sin without *any* atonement. But if so, how came an atonement to be so greatly insisted upon, as is represented by all the prodigious expence and labour, and multitude of services, and ceremonies, and so great an apparatus, and so great pomp, which, with so much exactness, were prescribed to be continued through so many ages, respecting their typical sacrifices and atonements, and from God's church were propagated through the world of mankind? No mere creature can have any thing to offer to God, which is not his already: for all that he has is God's gift to him.

§ 37. Let us consider how a perfectly wise, holy, and disinterested arbiter, whose office it should be to regulate all things within the whole compass of existence according to the most perfect propriety, would determine, in case the creature should injure the Most High, should cast contempt on the majesty, and trample on the authority of the infinite Lord of the universe: whether he would not determine, that in such a case the injury should be repaired, his majesty vindicated, and the sacredness of the authority thoroughly supported; and that it was very requisite, in order to things being regulated and disposed most fitly and beautifully, that such injuries should not be forgiven in the neglect of this, or without due care taken of this matter. If it be fit that the honour of God's majesty should be maintained at all in any degree, (which I suppose none will deny), then why is it not most fit that it should be maintained fully? If it would be quite improper and unsuitable, that the dignity of the Supreme Being, the sacredness of the authority of the infinitely great Governor of the world, should be entirely neglected, should be suffered at all times, and to the greatest degree, to be trampled on, without any care to defend or support it; and that the majesty of this great King, as to the manifestation of it, should be ob-

scured by his enemies to the greatest degree, and that continually and for ever, without any vindication or reparation at all; then why is it not most suitable and most becoming, that the vindication of it should be thorough, and the reparation complete and perfect ?

§ 38. What has been observed, may serve to shew the reasonableness of the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ; and that it is most rational to suppose, that if God did determine to forgive such as had cast contempt on his infinite majesty, and on his authority, as the infinitely high Lord over all, and to take such into favour, infinite wisdom would some way or other so contrive the matter, that the injury done to the appearance or exhibition of the dignity and sacred authority of the great King, should be fully repaired, and his majesty entirely vindicated, and set forth in all awfulness, inviolable sacredness and worthiness of regard and reverence. It cannot here be reasonably objected, that God is not capable of properly receiving any satisfaction for an injury, because he is not capable of receiving any benefit; that a price offered to men satisfies for an injury, because it may truly be a price to them, or a thing valuable and beneficial; but that God is not capable of receiving a benefit. For, God is as capable of receiving *satisfaction*, as *injury*. It is true, he cannot properly be profited; so neither can he be properly hurt. But, as rebelling against him, may properly be looked upon as of the nature of an injury or wrong done to God, and so God is capable of being the object of injuriousness; so, he is as capable of being the object of that which is the opposite of injuriousness, or the repairing of an injury. If you say, what need is there that God have any care for repairing the honour of his majesty, when it can do him no good, and no addition can be made to his happiness by it? You might as well say, what need is there that God care when he is despised and dishonoured, and his authority and glory trampled on; since it does him no hurt? It is a vain thing here to pretend, that God cares only, because it hurts creatures' own happiness for them to cast contempt on God. Is that agreeable to the natural light of all men's minds, to the natural sense of their hearts, and to the dictates of conscience, which unavoidably and necessarily arise, after some very direct, most profane, and daring opposition to, and reproach of the Most High, that God is now angry and much provoked, only because the audacious sinner has now greatly hurt himself, and hurt his neighbours, that

happen to see him? No, this is entirely diverse from the voice of natural sense in such a case, which inevitably suggests, that God is provoked, as one will regard himself for himself, as having a direct respect for his dignity and majesty. And this is agreeable to the strictest reason. It is impossible, if God infinitely loves and honours himself, as one infinitely worthy to be loved and esteemed, but that he should, from the same principle, proportionably abhor and oppose opposition to, and contempt of himself. And if it be in its own nature decent and proper for him thus to love himself, then it is in its own nature fit and becoming in him to hate opposition to himself. And for the same reason, and from the same principle, God, when he is contemned and injured, and his authority and glory are trampled in the dust, will be disposed to repair the injury done to his honour, and raise his injured majesty out of the dust again.

§ 39. The *satisfaction* of Christ, by suffering the punishment of sin, is properly to be distinguished, as being in its own nature different from the *merit* of Christ. For merit is only some excellency or worth. But when we consider Christ's sufferings merely as the satisfaction for the guilt of another, the excellency of Christ's act in suffering, does not at all come into consideration; but only those two things, viz. Their equality or equivalence to the punishment that the sinner deserved; and, 2dly, The union between him and them, or the propriety of his being accepted in suffering, as the representative of the sinner. Christ's bearing our punishment for us, is not properly meriting that we should not bear it, any more than, if it had been possible for us ourselves to have borne it all, that would have been meriting that we should not be punished any more. Christ's sufferings do not satisfy by any excellency in them, but by a fulfilment. To satisfy by a fulfilment, and to satisfy by worthiness or excellency, are different things. If the law be fulfilled, there is no need of any excellency or merit to satisfy it; because it is satisfied by taking place and having its course. Indeed, how far the dignity or worthiness of Christ's person comes into consideration, in determining the propriety of his being accepted as a representative of sinners, so that his suffering, when equivalent, can be accepted as theirs, may be matter of question and debate; but it is a matter entirely foreign to the present purpose.

§ 40. The blood of Christ washes away sin. So it is

represented in the Scripture. But although the blood of Christ washes away our *guilt*, it is the Spirit of Christ that washes away *pollution* and *stain* of sin. However the blood of Christ washes also from the filth of sin, as it purchases sanctification; it makes way for it by satisfying, and purchases it by the merit of obedience implied in it. The sacrifices under the law, typified Christ's sacrifice, not only as a satisfaction, but as meritorious obedience. They are called a sweet savour upon both these accounts. And therefore we find obedience compared with sacrifice, Psal. xl. 6, &c.

§ 41. Late philosophers seem ready enough to own the great importance of God's maintaining steady and inviolable the laws of the natural world. It may be worthy to be considered, whether it is not of as great, or greater importance, that the law of God, that great rule of righteousness between the supreme moral Governor and his subjects, should be maintained inviolate. As to any objection that may be made from the practice of human legislators, their dispensing with their own laws, and forbearing to execute them, and pardoning offenders, without any one being made to suffer in their stead; the case is vastly different in the Supreme Lawgiver and subordinate lawgivers, and in the Supreme Judge and subordinate judges. The latter give rules only to a certain small part of the commonwealth of moral agents, and with relation only to some few of their concerns, and for a little while. Human lawgivers are weak and fallible, and very imperfect in the exercises of a limited, subordinate, and infinitely inferior authority. But God is the great, infinitely wise, omniscient, holy, and absolutely perfect, Rector of all; to whom it belongs to establish a rule for the regulation of the whole universe of beings, through all eternity, in all that concerns them in the exercise of an infinitely strong right of supreme, absolute dominion and sovereignty. The laws of men may be dispensed with, who cannot foresee all cases that may happen; and, if they could, have not both the laws and the state of the subject perfectly at their own disposal, so as universally and perfectly to suit one to the other. But there is no wise and good law, but that care should be taken that it ordinarily be put in execution: and the nearer any human law approaches to the supreme or divine law in perfection, and in extent of jurisdiction, the more care should be taken of its execution: the wisdom of nations teaches this. Besides, repentance may be proportionable and answerable, at least in some measure, to offences against men.

And as to the public truth which is to be upheld in execution of the threatenings of human laws, there ought to be great care to uphold it, according to the true intent and meaning of those threatenings. If all that is meant, and all that, by the very nature of the public constitution, (the foundation on which all their laws stand), is to be understood by those threatenings, is, that the punishment shall be inflicted, excepting when the exigence of the public requires otherwise, or when the pleasure of the prince is otherwise ; then the public truth obliges to no more ; and this being done, the public truth is maintained.

CHAP. VII.

CONCERNING FAITH.

§ 1. **F**AITH is a *belief* of a *testimony*; 2 Thess. i. 10, "When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that *believe* (because our testimony among you was *believed*) in that day." 2 Thess. ii. 13. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and *belief* of the *truth*." 1 John v. 10. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he *believeth* not the *record* that God gave of his Son."

§ 2. It is the proper act of the soul towards God as *faithful*. Rom. iii. 3, 4. "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." It includes a *sense* of glory and excellency, or at least it is *with* such a sense. Matt. ix. 21. "She said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." 1 Cor. xii. 3. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." There is also in it a spiritual *taste* and relish of what is excellent and divine. Luke xii. 57. "Yea, and why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?" Believers receive the truth in the love of it, and speak the truth in love. Eph. iv. 15. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

§ 3. The *object* of faith is the *gospel*, as well as *Jesus Christ*. Mark i. 15. "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." John xvii. 8. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they received them, and

have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." Rom. x. 16, 17. "But they have not obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?—So then, faith coming by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It includes a *knowledge of God and Christ*. 2 Pet. i. 2, 3. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." John xvii. 3. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And a belief of *promises* and depending on them, is a great part of faith. Heb. xi. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," &c. Gal. v. 5. "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

§ 4. Faith is a *receiving* of Christ. John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him; established in the faith, as ye have been taught; abounding therein with thanksgivings." And it is receiving Christ into the *heart*. Rom. x.—6, 10. "But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ from the dead) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and *in thy heart*, (that is, the word of faith, which we preach), That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For *with the heart* man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." True faith includes *accepting* the gospel. 1 Tim. i. 14, 15. "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which in in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and *worthy of all acceptation*, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 2. Cor. ii. 4. "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached; or if you receive another Spirit, which

ye have not received ; or another gospel, which ye have not *accepted*, ye might bear with him."

§ 5. It is something more than merely the assent of the understanding, because it is called *obeying* the gospel. Rom. x. 16. "But they have not all *obeyed* the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath *believed* our report?" 1 Pet. iv. 17. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God : and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that *obey* not the gospel of God?" Rom. xv. 18. "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles *obedient*, by word and deed." It is *obeying* the doctrine from the *heart* ; Rom. vi. 17, 18. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin ; but ye have *obeyed from the heart* that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness," &c. This expression, "obeying the gospel," seems to denote the heart's *yielding* to the gospel in what it proposes to us in its calls : it is something more than believing the truth of the gospel. John xii. 42. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him ; but, because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

§ 6. It is a *trusting* in Christ. Psal. ii. 12. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little : blessed are all they that *put their trust in him*." Eph. i. 12, 13. "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first *trusted in Christ* : in whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation : in whom also, after that ye *believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Many places in the Old Testament speak of *trusting* in God as the condition of his favour and salvation ; especially Psal. lxxviii. 21, 22. "Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth : so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel ; because they *believed* not in God, and *trusted* not in his salvation." Rom. xv. 12. "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse ; and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles *trust*." 1 Tim. iv. 10. "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we *trust* in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that *believe*."

§ 7. It is a *committing* ourselves to Christ; 2 Tim. i. 12. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have *believed*, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have *committed* unto him against that day." This is a Scripture sense of the word *believe*, as is evident by John ii. 24. "Jesus did not commit himself to them." In the original it is οὐκ ἐπίστευεν αὐτοῖς αὐτοῖς.

§ 8. It is *gladly receiving* the gospel; Acts ii. 41. "Then they that *gladly received* his word, were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." It is what may be well understood by those expressions of *coming* to Christ, of *looking* to him, of *opening* the door to let him in. This is very evident by Scripture. It is *taking* the waters of life, *eating* and *drinking* his flesh and blood, *hearing* Christ's voice, and *following* him. John x. 26, 27. "But ye *believe* not; because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep *hear* my voice, and I know them, and they *follow* me." Isaiah xlv. 22. "*Look* unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." It also consists in being *persuaded of*, and in *embracing* the promises; Heb. xi. 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were *persuaded* of them, and *embraced* them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

§ 9. There is contained in the nature of faith a *sense* of our own *unworthiness*. Mat. xv. 27, 28. "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy *faith*." See concerning the centurion, Luke vii. 6—9: the woman which was a sinner, ib. v. 37, 38. and especially 50; the prodigal son, Luke xv; the penitent thief, Luke xxiii. 41. Consult also Hab. ii. 4. "Behold his soul which is *lifted up*, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his *faith*. Prov. xxviii. 25; Psal. xl. 4, and Psal. cxxxi. And *love* either arises from, or is included in faith, John iii. 18, 19. "He that *believeth not*, is condemned already; and this is their condemnation, that men *loved* darkness rather than light." 2 Thess. ii. 10, 12. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; be-

cause they received not the *love* of the truth, that they might be saved. That they all might be damned who *believed* not the truth, but had *pleasure* in unrighteousness." Faith is being *a-thirst* for the waters of life. Rev. xxi. 6. It is a true cordial *seeking* of salvation by Christ; and heartily *joining* ourselves to Christ and to his party. It is to *hearken* to him as a prophet; to *yield* ourselves subject to him as a king; and to *depend* upon him as a priest. *Desiring* Christ, is an act of *faith* in him, because he is called the *desire* of all nations; Hag. ii. 7. that is, he that is to be the desire of all nations, when all nations shall *believe* in him and subject themselves to him, according to the frequent promises and prophecies of God's word; though there are other things included in the sense, yet this seems to be principally intended. There belongs to faith a sense of the *ability* and sufficiency of Christ to save, and of his *fitness* for the work of salvation: Matt. ix. 2, 21, and 28, 29. Rom. iv. 21. "And being fully *persuaded*, that what he had promised, he is *able* to perform." And a sense of his *readiness* to save, Matt. xv. 22. &c. It is what may be well represented by fleeing for refuge, by the type of fleeing to the city of refuge. Heb. vi. 18. "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have *fled* for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." The heart must *close* with the new covenant by *dependence* upon it, and by *love* and *desire*. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. This is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

§ 10. Upon the whole, the best and clearest, and most perfect definition of *justifying faith*, and most according to the Scripture, that I can think of, is this, faith is the soul's *entirely embracing the revelation of Jesus Christ as our Saviour*. The word *embrace* is a metaphorical expression; but I think it much clearer than any proper expression whatsoever: It is called believing; because believing is the first act of the soul in embracing a narration or revelation; and embracing, when conversant about a revelation or thing declared, is more properly called believing, than loving or choosing. If it were conversant about a *person* only, it would be more properly called *loving*. If it were only conversant about a gift, an inheritance or reward, it would more properly be called *receiving* or *accepting*, &c.

The definition might have been expressed in these words, faith is the soul's entirely *adhering* to, and *acquiescing* in the revelation of Jesus Christ as our Saviour.—Or thus, faith is the soul's embracing that truth of God, which reveals Jesus Christ as our Saviour.—Or thus, faith is the soul's entirely acquiescing in, and depending upon the truth of God, revealing Christ as our Saviour.

It is the whole soul assenting to the truth, and embracing of it. There is an entire yielding of the mind and heart to the revelation, and a closing with it, and adhering to it, with the belief, and with the inclination and affection. It is admitting and receiving it with entire credit and respect. The soul receives it as true, as worthy and excellent. It may be more perfectly *described*, than *defined* by a short definition, by reason of the penury of words: a great many words express it better than one or two. I here use the same metaphorical expressions; but it is because they are much clearer than any proper expressions that I know of. It is the soul's entirely acquiescing in this revelation, from a sense of the sufficiency, dignity, glory and excellency of its Author. The whole soul's active agreeing, according and symphonizing with this truth; all opposition in judgment and inclination, so far as he believes, being taken away. It is called *believing*, because fully believing this revelation, is the first and principal *exercise* and *manifestation* of this accordance and agreement of soul.

§ 11. Adhering to the *truth* and acquiescing in it with the *judgment*, is from a sense of the glory of the revealer, and the sufficiency and excellency of the performer of the facts. Adhering to it, and acquiescing in it with the *inclination* and affection, is from the goodness and excellency of the thing revealed, and of the performer. If a person be pursued by an enemy, and *commit* himself to a king or a captain, to defend him, it implies his *quitting* other endeavours, *applying* to him for defence, *putting* himself under him, and *hoping* that he will defend him. If we consider it as a mere act of the mind, a transaction between spiritual beings, considered as abstracted from any external action, then it is the mind's *quitting* all other endeavours and seeking and applying itself to the Saviour for salvation, fully choosing salvation by him, and delivering itself to him, or a being willing to be his, with a hope that he will save him. Therefore, for a person to commit himself to Christ as a Saviour, is *quitting* all other endeavours and hopes, and heartily applying himself to Christ.

for salvation, fully choosing salvation by him, and acquiescing in his way of salvation, and a hearty consent of the soul to be his entirely, hoping in his sufficiency and willingness to save.

From the excellency and sufficiency of the revealer and performer, we believe what is said is true, fully believe it; and from the glorious excellency of the Saviour and his salvation, all our inclination closes with the revelation. To depend upon the word of another person, imports two things: *first*, To be sensible how greatly it concerns us, and how much our interest and happiness really depend upon the truth of it; and, *secondly*, To dare to act upon it, as if it were really true. I do not say, that I think these words are the only true definition of faith. I have used words that most naturally express it, of any I could think of. There might have been other words used, much of the same sense.

§ 12. Though hope does not enter into the essential nature of faith, yet it is the natural and necessary, and next immediate fruit of true faith. In the first act of faith, the soul is enlightened with a sense of the merciful nature of God and of Christ, and believes the declarations that are made in God's word of it; and it humbly and heartily applies and seeks to Christ; and it sees such a congruity between the declared mercy of God, and the disposition he then feels towards him, that he cannot but hope, that the declared mercy will be exercised towards him. Yea, he sees that it would be incongruous for God to give him such inclination and motions of heart towards Christ as a Saviour, if he were not to be saved by him.

§ 13. Any thing that may be called a receiving the revelation of the gospel is not faith, but such a sort of receiving it, as is suitable to the nature of the gospel, and the respect it has to us. The act of reception suitable to truth, is believing it. The suitable reception of that which is excellent, is choosing it and loving it. The proper act of reception of a revelation of deliverance from evil, and the conferring of happiness, is, acquiescing in it and depending upon it. The proper reception of a Saviour, is, committing ourselves to him and trusting in him. The proper act of reception of the favour of God, is, believing and esteeming it, and rejoicing in it. He that suitably receives forgiveness of his fault, does with a humble sense of his fault rejoice in the pardon. Thus, for instance, he that reads a *truth* that no way

concerns his interest, if he believes it, it is proper to say he receives it. But if there be a declaration of some glorious and excellent truth that nearly concerns him, he that *only* believes it, cannot be said to receive it. And if a captain offers to deliver a distressed people, they that only believe what he says, without committing themselves to him, and putting themselves under him, cannot be said to receive him. So, if a prince offers one his favour, he that does not esteem his favour, cannot be said heartily to accept thereof. Again, if one offended offers pardon to another, he cannot be said to receive it, if he be not sensible of his fault, and does not care for the displeasure of the offended. The whole act of reception suitable to the nature of the gospel, and its relation to us, and our circumstances with respect to it, is best expressed, (if it be expressed in one word), by the word *πίστις* or *faies*.

§ 14. The word *πίστις*, *faith*, seems to be the most proper term to express the cordial reception of Christ and of the truth, for these reasons. *First*, this revelation is of things spiritual, unseen, strange, and wonderful, exceedingly remote from all the objects of sense, and those things which we commonly converse with in this world, and also exceedingly alien from our fallen nature: so that it is the *first* and principal *manifestation* of the symphony between the soul and these divine things, that it believes them, and acquiesces in them as true. And, *secondly*, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the gospel, appears principally under the character of a Saviour, and not so much of a person absolutely excellent: and therefore, the proper act of reception of him, consists principally in the exercise of a sense of our need of him, and of his sufficiency, his ability, his mercy and love, his faithfulness, the sufficiency of his method of salvation, the sufficiency and completeness of the salvation itself, of the deliverance and of the happiness, and an answerable application of the soul to him for salvation; which can be expressed so well by no other word but *faith*, or *affiance*, or *confidence*, or *trust*, and others of the same signification; of which, *πίστις* or *faith*, is much the best, and the most significant; because the rest, in their common significations imply something that is not of the absolute essence of faith. *Thirdly*, we have these things exhibited to us, to be received by us, only by a divine testimony. We have nothing else to hold them forth to us.

§ 15. Faith prepares the way for the removal of guilt of

conscience. Guilt of conscience, is the sense of the connexion between the sin of the subject and punishment ; *1st*, by God's law ; and *2d*, by God's nature and the propriety of the thing. The mind is under the weight of guilt, as long as it has a sense of its being bound to punishment, according to the reason and nature of things, and the requirements of the divine government. Faith prepares the way for the removal of this. Therefore there must be in faith, 1. a belief that the law is answered and satisfied by Jesus Christ ; and 2. such a sense of the way of salvation by Christ, that it shall appear proper, and be dutiful, and according to the reason of things, that sin should not be punished in us, but that we nevertheless should be accepted through Christ. When the mind sees a way in which this can be done, and there is nothing in the law, nor in the divine nature, nor nature of things, to hinder it ; that of itself lightens the burden, and creates hope. It causes the mind to see that it is not for ever bound by the reason of things to suffer ; though the mind does not know that it has performed the condition of pardon. This is to have a sense of the sufficiency of this way of salvation. When a man commits sin and is sensible of it, his soul has a natural sense of the propriety of punishment in such a case, a sense that punishment, according to the reason of things, belongs to him ; for the same reasons as all nations have a sense of the propriety of punishing men for crimes. That easiness of mind which persons often have, before they have comfort from a sense of their being converted, arises from a sense they have of God's sovereignty. They see nothing either in the nature of God or of things, that will necessarily bind them to punishment ; but that God may damn them, if he pleases ; and may save them, if he pleases. When persons are brought to that, then they are fit to be comforted ; then their comfort is like to have a true and immoveable foundation, when their dependence is no way upon themselves, but wholly upon God. In order to such a sense of the sufficiency of this way of salvation, it must be seen, that God has no disposition, and no need, to punish us.

§ 16. Hence we learn, that our experience of the sufficiency of the gospel, to give peace of conscience, is a rational inward witness to the truth of the gospel. When the mind sees such a fitness in this way of salvation, that it takes off the burthen—arising from the sense of its being necessarily bound to punishment, through proper desert, and from the demands

of reason and nature—it is a strong argument, that it is not a thing of mere human imagination. When we experience its fitness to answer its end, this is the third of the three that bear witness on earth. The *Spirit* bears witness, by discovering the divine glory, and those stamps of divinity that are in the gospel. The *water* bears witness; that is, the experience of the power of the gospel to *purify* and sanctify the heart, witnesses the truth of it: and the *blood* bears witness by delivering the conscience from *guilt*. Any other sort of faith than this sense of the sufficiency of Christ's salvation, does not give such immediate glory and honour to Christ, and does not so necessarily and immediately infer the necessity of Christ's being known. Nothing besides makes all christianity so to hang upon actual respect to Christ, and centre in him. Surely, the more the sinner has an inward, an immediate, and sole dependence upon Christ, the more Christ has the glory of his salvation from him. In order to this sort of sense of the congruity of our sins being forgiven, and of punishments being removed, by the satisfaction of Christ, there must of necessity be a sense of our guiltiness. For it is impossible that any congruity should be seen, without comparison of the satisfaction with the guilt. And they cannot be compared, except there be a *sense* of them both. There must not only be such a sense of God's being angry, and his anger being very dreadful, without any sense of the reasonableness of that anger; but there must be a proper *sense* of the desert of wrath, such as there is in repentance. Sinners, under conviction of their guilt, are generally afraid that God is so angry with them, that he never will give them faith in Christ. They think the majesty and jealousy of God will not allow of it. Therefore, there goes with a sense of the sufficiency of Christ, a sense of God's sovereignty with respect to mercy and judgment, that he will and may have mercy in Christ, on whom he will have mercy, and leave to hardness whom he will. This eases of that burden.

§ 17. For a man to trust in his own righteousness, is to conceive hopes of some favour of God, or some freedom from his displeasure, from a false notion of his own goodness or excellency, and the proportion it bears to that favour; and of his own badness, and the relation it bears to his displeasure. It is to conceive hopes of some favour of God, from a false notion of the relation which our own goodness or excellency bears to that favour; whether this mistaken relation be supposed to

imply an obligation in natural justice, or propriety and decency, or an obligation in point of wisdom and honour. This excellency we speak of, is either real or supposed; either negative, in not being so bad as others and the like, or positive. Whether it be natural or moral excellency, is immaterial: also, whether the sinner himself looks upon it as an excellency, or supposes God looks upon it as such. For men to trust in their own righteousness, is to entertain hope of escaping any displeasure, or obtaining any positive favour from God, from too high a notion of our own moral excellency, or too light a notion of our badness, as compared with or related to that favour or displeasure.

§ 18. The difficulty in giving a definition of faith is, that we have no word that clearly and adequately expresses the whole act of acceptance, or closing of the soul or heart with Christ. Inclination expresses it but partially; conviction expresses it also but in part; the sense of the soul does not do it fully. And if we use metaphorical expressions, such as embrace, and love, &c. they are obscure, and will not carry the same idea with them to the minds of all. All words that are used to express such acts of the mind, are of a very indeterminate signification. It is a difficult thing to find words to exhibit our own ideas. Another difficulty is to find a word, that shall clearly express the whole goodness or righteousness of the Saviour and of the gospel. To be *true*, is one part of the goodness of the gospel. For the Saviour to be *sufficient*, is one part of his goodness. To be *suitable*, is another part. To be *bountiful*, is another part, &c. The idea of a real good, or lovely object, that is conceived to be real, possesses the heart after another manner, than a very lovely idea that is only imaginary. So that there is need of both a sense of goodness and reality, to unite the heart to the Saviour. There is implied in believing in Christ, not only that exercise of mind, which arises from a sense of his excellency and reality as a Saviour: but also that which arises from the consideration of his relation to us, and of our concern in him, his being a Saviour for such as we are; for sinful men; and a Saviour that is *offered* with his benefits to us. The angels have a sense of the reality and goodness of Christ as a Saviour, and may be said with joy to *embrace* the *discovery* of it. They cannot, however, be said to believe in Christ. The spirit that they receive, the notice that they have of Christ the Saviour is the same; but there is a difference in the act, by reason of the

different *relation* that Christ, as a Saviour, stands in to us, from what he doth to them.

§ 19. That ease of mind which arises from a sense of the sufficiency of Christ, may well be called a trusting in that sufficiency. It gives a quietness to the mind, to see that there is a way wherein it may be saved, to see a good and sufficient way, wherein its salvation is very *possible*, and the attributes of God cannot be opposite to it. This gives ease, though it be not yet certain that he shall be saved. But to believe Christ's sufficiency, so as to be thus far easy, may be called a trusting in Christ, though it cannot be trusting in him that he *will* save us. To be easy in any degree, on a belief or persuasion of the *sufficiency* of any thing for our good, is a degree of trusting. There is in faith not only a *belief* of what the gospel declares, that Christ has satisfied for our sins, and merited eternal life; but there is also a *sense* of it; a sense that Christ's sufferings do satisfy, and that he did merit, or was worthy that we should be accepted for his sake. There is a difference between being *convinced* that it is so, and having a *sense* that it is so. There is in the essence of justifying faith, included a receiving of Christ as a Saviour *from* sin. For we embrace him as the author of life, as well as a Saviour from misery. But the sum of that eternal life which Christ purchased is holiness; it is a holy happiness. And there is in faith a liking of the happiness that Christ has procured and offers. The Jews despising the pleasant land, is mentioned as part of their unbelief. It must be as the gospel reveals, or in the gospel notion of him, the soul must close with Christ. For whosoever is offended in Christ, in the view that the gospel gives us of him, cannot be said to believe in him; for he is one that is excluded from blessedness, by that saying of Christ, Matt. xi. 6. "Blessed is he whosoever is not^d offended in me."

§ 20. There is a hope *implied* in the essence of justifying faith. Thus there is hope, that I *may* obtain justification by Christ, though there is not contained in its essence a hope that I *have* obtained it. And so there is a trust in Christ contained in the essence of faith. There is a trust implied in seeking to Christ to be my Saviour, in an apprehension that he is a sufficient Saviour; though not a trust in him, as one that has promised to save me, as having already performed the condition of the promise. If a city was besieged and distressed

by a potent enemy, and should hear of some great champion at a distance, and should be induced by what they hear of his valour and goodness, to seek and send to him for relief, believing what they have heard of his sufficiency, and thence conceiving hope that they may be delivered; the people, in sending, may be said to *trust* in such a champion: as of old the children of Israel, when they sent into Egypt for help, were said to *trust* in Egypt.

§ 21. Faith is that inward sense and act, of which *prayer* is the expression; as is evident, 1. Because in the same manner as the freedom of grace, according to the gospel covenant, is often set forth by this, that he that believes, receives; so it also oftentimes is by this, that he that asks, or prays, or calls upon God, receives; Matt. vii. 7—10.; Luke xi. 9. “Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? How much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Matt. xxi. 21, 22. “Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have *faith*, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree; but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea: it shall be done; and all things whatsoever ye shall *ask in prayer, believing*, ye shall receive.” Joel ii. 32. The prophet speaking there of gospel times, says, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.” Rom. x. 12, 13. “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;” quoting the forementioned place in Joel. The same expressions that are used in scripture for *faith*, may be well used for *prayer* also; such as coming to God or Christ, and looking to him. Eph. iii. 12. “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the *faith* of him.” Prayer is often plainly spoken of as the *expression* of faith. As it very certainly is in Rom. x. 11—14. “For the scripture saith, whosoever *believeth* on him, shall not be ashamed. For there

is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that *call upon him*: for whosoever shall *call on the name of the Lord* shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not *believed*?" Christian prayer is called the prayer of *faith*, James v. 15. And believing is often mentioned as the life and soul of true prayer, as in the forementioned place. Matt. xxi. 21, 22. Heb. x. 19, 22. "Draw near in full assurance of faith." James i. 5, 6. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in *faith*, nothing wavering."—*Faith* in God, is expressed in *praying* to God. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is expressed in *praying* to Christ, and *praying* in the name of Christ; John xiv. 13, 14. And the promises are made to *asking* in Christ's name, in the same manner as they are to *believing* in Christ. John xiv. 13, 14. "And whatsoever ye shall *ask* in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall *ask* any thing in my name, I will do it." Chap. xvi. 23, 24. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall *ask* the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto you have *asked* nothing in my name: *ask*, and receive, that your joy may be full."

§ 22. The condition both of the first and second covenant, is a receiving, compliance with, or yielding to, a signification or declaration from God; or to a revelation made from God. A receiving or yielding to a signification of the will of God, as our sovereign Lord and lawgiver, is most properly called obedience. The receiving and yielding to a strange mysterious revelation and offer which God makes of mercy to sinners, being a revelation of things spiritual, supernatural, invisible, and mysterious, through the infinite power, wisdom and grace of God, is properly called *faith*. There is indeed *obedience* in the condition of both covenants, and there is *faith* or believing God in both. But the different name arises from the remarkably different nature of the revelation or manifestations made. The one is a *law*; the other a *testimony* and offer. The one is a signification of what God expects that we should do towards him, and what he expects to receive from us; the other a revelation of what he has done for us, and an offer of what we may receive from him. The one is an expression of God's great authority over us, in order to our yielding to the authority; the other is a revelation of God's mysterious and

wonderful mercy, and wisdom, and power for us, in order to a reception answerable to such a revelation.

§ 23. Faith is not all kind of *assent* to the word of God as *true* and divine. For so the Jews in Christ's time *assented* to the book of Moses, and therefore Christ tells them, that they *trusted* in Moses; John v. 25. "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust." Yet the very thing that Moses accuses them for, was *not believing* in him, *i. e.* believing so as to yield to his sayings, and comply with him, or obey him, as the phrase in the New Testament is concerning Christ. And therefore Christ says in the next verse, "For had ye *believed* Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." There may be a strong belief of divine things in the understanding, and yet no *saving* faith; as is manifest by 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing." Not only trusting in Christ, as one that has undertaken to save us, and as believing that he is *our* Saviour, is faith; but *applying* to him, or *seeking* to him, that he would become *our* Saviour, with a sense of his reality and goodness as a Saviour, is faith; as is evident by Rom. xv. 12. "In him shall the Gentiles trust." Compared with the place whence it is cited, Heb. xi. 10. "To it shall the Gentiles *seek*;" together with Psalm ix. 10. "And they that know thy name, will put their *trust* in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that *seek* thee." Which agrees well with faith's being called a *looking* to Christ, or *coming* to him for life, a *flying* for refuge to him, or *flying* to him for safety. And this is the first act of saving faith. And prayer being the expression of faith, confirms this. This is further confirmed by Isaiah xxxi. 2. "Wo to them that go down into Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and *trust* in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong: but they *look* not unto the holy One of Israel, neither *seek* the Lord." When it is said, Psalm. lxxix. 6. "Let not them that *wait* on thee, O Lord, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that *seek* thee be confounded for my sake." It is equivalent to that scripture, "He that *believeth* shall never be confounded." And when it is said, verse 32. "And your heart shall live that *seek* the Lord;" it is equivalent to that scripture, "The just shall live by faith." So Psalm xxii. 26. and Psalm lxx. 4. And So Amos v. 4. "For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel, *Seek* ye me, and ye shall live." And ver. 6. "*Seek* the Lord and ye shall live."

And verse 8. “*Seek* him that made the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning.” Isaiah xvii. 7, 8. “At that day shall a man *look* to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the holy One of Israel; and he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands; neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images.” Isaiah xlv. 22. “*Look* unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”

§ 24. That there are different *sorts* of faith, and that all believing that Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, &c. is not true and saving faith—or that which most commonly has the name of faith appropriated to it in the New Testament—is exceedingly evident by John vi. 64. “But there are some of *you* that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.” Here all false disciples, that had but a temporary faith, that thought him to be the Messiah, but would fall away, as Judas and others, are said to be those that *believed not*, making an essential difference between their belief, and that grace that has the term faith, or believing, appropriated to it. Faith is a receiving Christ into the *heart*, in such a sense as to believe that he is what he declares himself to be, and to have such an high esteem of him as an excellent Lord and Saviour, and so to prize him, and so to depend upon him, as not to be ashamed nor afraid to profess him, and openly and constantly to appear on his side. See Rom. x. 8. to 13.

§ 25. Trusting in *riches*, as Christ uses the expression concerning the rich young man, and as the expression is used elsewhere, is an extensive expression, comprehending many dispositions, affections, and exercises of the heart towards riches: so faith in Christ, or trusting in Christ, is as extensive. The soul’s active closing or uniting with Christ, is faith. But the act of the soul, in its uniting or closing, must be agreeable to the kind and nature of the union that is to be established between Christ and the saints, and that subsists between them, and is the foundation of the saints communion with Christ. Such is the nature of it, that it is not merely like the various parts of a building, that are cemented and cleave fast together; or as marbles and precious stones may be joined, so as to become one: but it is such a kind of union as subsists between the head and living members, between stock and branches; between which, and the head or stock,

there is such a kind of union, that there is an entire, immediate, perpetual dependence for, and derivation of, nourishment, refreshment, beauty, fruitfulness, and all supplies: yea, life and being. And the union is wholly for this purpose; this derivation is the end of it; and it is the most essential thing in the union. Now, such an union as this, when turned into act, (if I may so say), or an active union of an intelligent rational being, that is agreeable to this kind of union, and is a recognition and expression, and as it were the active band of it, is something else besides mere love. It is an act most properly expressed by the name of faith, according to the proper meaning of the word so translated, as it was used in the days when the Scriptures were written.

§ 26. Trusting in a *prince* or ruler, as the phrase was understood among the Jews, implied in it faithful adherence and entire subjection, submission and *obedience*. So much the phrase plainly implies; Judges ix. 15. "And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye annoint me king over you, then come and put your *trust* in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." We have an account of the fulfilment of this parable in the sequel—How the men of Shechem did not prove *faithful* subjects to Abimelech, according to their covenant or agreement with him, but dealt treacherously with him: Verse 23. And how accordingly Abimelech proved the occasion of their destruction. The like figure of speech is used to signify the nations obedience to the king of Assyria; Ezek. xxi. 6. Our trusting in God and Christ, is often expressed by our trusting in his shadow, and under the shadow of his wings, and the like; Psal. xvii. 8. and xxxvi. 7 and lvii. 1. and lxiii. 7. and xci. 1; Cant. ii. 3; Isaiah iv. 6. and xxv. 4. Here see Ruth ii. 12. compared with chap. i. 16. John iii. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: he that believeth not the Son, *απαθω*." The force of the word may in some measure be learned from Acts v. 36, 37. and Acts v. 40. "And to him they agreed or *obeyed*; the word is the same. And Acts xxiii. 21. "But do not thou *yield* unto them;" the word is the same in the Greek. Acts xxvi. 19. "I was not *disobedient* (*απειθεῖς*) to the heavenly vision;" Rom. 1. 30. "Disobedient to parents *απειθεῖς*. See also Acts xvii. 4. "Some of them *believed* (in the Greek *επιθενοσαν*) and consorted with Paul and Silas." Acts xiv. 2. "The *unbelieving* Jews, *απειθεῖς*" Eph. ii. 2. "The spirit that now worketh in the

children of *disobedience*, ἀπειθείας." We may judge something of the force of the word παρομοιαί, by the signification of the word whence it comes: παρομοιαί is the passive of παρομοιαί, which signifies, to counsel, to move or entice, draw or persuade unto.

§ 27. It is fit that, seeing we *depend* so entirely and universally, visibly and remarkably, on God, in our fallen state, for happiness—and seeing the special design of God was to bring us into such a great and most evident dependence—that the act of the soul, by which it is interested in this benefit, bestowed in this way, should correspond; viz. a *looking* and *seeking* to, and *depending* on God for it; that the union of heart, (that is the proper term,) should imply such an application of the soul to God, and seeking his benefits only and entirely, and with full sense of dependence on him. As the condition before was *obedience*, or rendering to God, so now it is *seeking* and *looking* to him, *drawing* and *deriving* from him, and with the whole heart *depending* on him, on his power and free grace, &c. Faith is the proper active union of the soul with Christ as our Saviour, as revealed to us in the gospel. But the proper active union of the soul with Christ as our Saviour, as revealed to us in the gospel, is the soul's active agreeing, and suiting or adapting itself in its act, to the exhibition God gives us of Christ and his redemption; to the nature of the exhibition, being pure revelation, and a revelation of things perfectly above our senses and reason; and to Christ himself in his person as revealed, and in the character under which he is revealed to us; and to our state with regard to him in that character; and to our need of him, and concern with him, and his relation to us, and to the benefits to us, with which he is exhibited and offered to us in that revelation; and to the great design of God in that method and divine contrivance of salvation revealed. But the most proper name for such an active union of the soul to Christ, as this, of any that language affords, is *faith*.

§ 28. The revelation or exhibition that God *first* made of himself, was of his authority, demanding and requiring of us, that we should render something to him that nature and reason required. The act of the soul that is suitable to such an exhibition, may be expressed by *submitting*, *doing*, *obeying*, and *rendering* to God. The exhibition which God makes of himself, *since* our fall, in the gospel, is not of his

power and authority, as demanding of us, but of his sufficiency for us, as needy, empty, helpless; and of his grace and mercy to us, as unworthy and miserable. And the exhibition is by pure revelation of things quite above all our senses and reason, or the reach of any created faculties, being of the mere good pleasure of God. The act in us, that is proper and suitable to, and well according to such an exhibition as this, may be expressed by such names as, believing, seeking, looking, depending, acquiescing, or, in one word, *faith*.

§ 29. That *believing*, in the New Testament, is much the same as *trusting*, in the Old, is confirmed by comparing Jer. xvii. 5. "Cursed is the man that *trusteth* in man, and maketh flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the Lord;" Ver. 7. "Blessed is the man that *trusteth* in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is"—with Heb. iii. 12. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be any of you an evil heart of *unbelief*, in departing from the living God." It also is confirmed by this, that trusting God, and hoping in him, are used in the Old Testament as expressions of the same import. So hope is often in the New Testament used to signify the same thing that, in other places, is signified by faith. Rom. xv. 12, 13. "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust."—"Now, the God of peace fill you with all joy and peace in *believing*, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." Compare Dan. iii. 38. with Dan. vi. 23. and Heb. xi. 33, 34.

§ 30. That saving faith implies in its nature *divine love*, is manifest by 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that *loveth* him that begat, *loveth* him also that is begotten of him." The apostle's design in this verse seems to be, to shew the connexion there is between a true and sincere respect to God, and a respect to and union with Christ; so that he who is united to the Son, is so to the Father, and *vice versa*. As he *believes* in Christ, and so *loves* him, it is evident that he is a child of God. He, whose heart is united to the Father, is so to the Son. He that *loveth* him that begat, *loveth* him also that is begotten of him. (Compare chap. ii. 22, 23, 24. and chap. iv. 15.; with John xiv. 1. and John xv. 23, 24.) This shews, that *love* is the main thing in saving *faith*, the life and

power of it, by which it produces great effects ; agreeably to what the apostle Paul says, when he calls saving faith, *faith effectual by love*.

§ 31. The distinction of the several constituent parts, or acts of faith, into *assent*, *consent*, and *affiance*, if strictly examined, will appear not to be proper and just, or according to the truth and nature of things ; because the parts are not all entirely distinct one from another, and so are in some measure confounded. For the *last*, viz. *affiance*, implies the other two, assent and consent ; and is nothing else but a man's assent and consent, with particular relation or application to himself and his own case, together with the effect of all in his own quietness and comfort of mind, and boldness in venturing on this foundation, in conduct and practice.

Affiance consists in these five things : 1. Consent to something proposed, to be obtained by another person, as good, eligible or desirable. 2. Assent of the judgment to the reality of the good, as to be obtained ; that he is sufficient, faithful, &c. 3. The mind's applying itself to him for it, which is no other than the soul's desiring him to make it possess of this good. 4. Hoping that the good will be obtained in this way ; which hope consists in expectation of the good, and in some ease, quietness, or comfort of mind arising from this expectation. 5. Adventuring some interest on this hope in practice ; which consists either in doing something that implies trouble, or brings expence or suffering, or in omitting something that we should otherwise do ; by which omission some good is foregone, or some evil is incurred. If these acts cannot in strictness all take place at the same moment of time, though they follow one another in the order of nature, yet they are all implied in the act that is exercised the first moment, so far as that act is of such a nature as implies a necessary tendency to what follows. In these three last especially consists man's *committing himself to Christ as a Saviour*. In the third and fourth especially consists the soul's *looking to Christ as a Saviour*.

§ 32. In that consent to the way or method of salvation, which there is in saving faith, the heart has especially respect to two things in that method, that are the peculiar glory of it, and whereby it is peculiarly contrary to corrupt nature.

1. Its being a way wherein God is *exalted*, and man *debased*.

God is made all in all, and man nothing. God is magnified as self-sufficient and all-sufficient, and as being all in all to us ; his power and his grace, and Christ's satisfaction and merits being all : and man is annihilated ; his power, his righteousness, his dignity, his works, are made as nothing.

2. Its being so *holy* a way. It is a way of mere mercy, yet of *holy* mercy ; mercy in saving the sinner, but shewing no favour or countenance to sin ; a way of free grace, yet of holy grace ; not grace exercised to the prejudice of God's holiness, but in such a way as peculiarly to manifest God's hatred of sin, and opposition to it, and strict justice in punishing it, and that he will by no means clear the guilty ; every way manifesting the infinite evil and odiousness of sin, much more than if there had been no salvation offered. Therefore, *humiliation* and *holiness* are the chief ingredients in the act of consent to this way of salvation.

§ 33. In these things I have spoken only of a consent to the *way* or *method* of salvation. But in saving faith is included also a consent to the salvation *itself*, or the benefit procured. What is peculiarly contrary to this in corrupt nature, is a worldly spirit ; and therefore in order to this act of consent, there must be mortification to, or weanedness from, the world, and a selling of all for the pearl of great price. Besides all these, there is in saving faith a consent to *Christ himself*, or a closing of the heart or inclination with the person of Christ. This implies *humiliation* ; for as long as men deify themselves, they will not adore Jesus Christ. It implies *sanctification* ; for Christ's beauty, for which his person is delighted in and chosen, is especially his holiness. It implies *forsaking* the world ; for as long as men set their hearts on the world as their chief good, and have that as the chief object of the relish and complacence of their minds, they will not relish and take complacence in Christ, and set their hearts on him as their best good. The heart of a true believer, therefore, consents to these things exhibited in the gospel of salvation : The *person* who is the author of the salvation ; The *benefit*, or the salvation itself ; The *way* or *method* in which this person is the author of this benefit.

§ 34. Faith is often called by the name of *ὑπακοή*, hearing ; hearkening, yielding to, and obeying the gospel, obeying Christ, being obedient to the faith, obeying the form of doctrine, &c. Hence we may learn the nature of saving faith ;

that it is an accepting, yielding to, and complying with, the gospel, as such a call and invitation; which implies the hearing of the mind, *i. e.* the mind's apprehending or understanding the call; a believing of the voice, and the offer and promises contained in it; and accepting, esteeming, prizing the person and benefits invited to; a falling in of the inclination, the choice, the affection, &c. It not only signifies dependance, as it appears in venturing in practice, but also as it appears in the *rest* of the mind, in opposition to anxiety; as appears by Luke xii. 22—23.) "Take no thought—how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith!—Fear not little flock, it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"—compared with Philip. iv. 6, 7. and Peter v. 7. This is agreeable to that phrase used for trusting in the Old Testament, "Roll thy burthen on the Lord." Matt. xiv. 30, 31. "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried, saying, Lord save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

§ 35. The following inquiries concerning saving faith, are important: Whether justifying faith, in its proper essence, implies, besides the act of the judgment, also an act of the *inclination* and will? Whether it properly implies *love* in its essence? What are the scripture descriptions, characters, and representations of *justifying* faith? What is the true *definition* of justifying faith, a definition which agrees with the scripture representation of faith, and takes all in? Whether the word *faith*, as used in the gospel, has a signification diverse from what it has in common speech? Why the word *faith*, is used to signify a *complex* act of the mind? How far *trusting* in Christ is of the nature and essence of faith? Whether assent, consent and affiance, be a proper distribution of the various and distinct acts of faith? Whether *hope*, as the word is used in the New Testament, be properly distinct from saving faith? What does the word *trust* imply in *common* speech? What it implies as used in *Scripture*? In what sense faith implies *obedience*? What is the nature of *self-righteousness*? How self-righteousness is peculiarly *opposite* to the nature of faith? In what sense there must be a particular *application* in the act of saving faith? Whether the first act of faith is certainly *more* lively and sensible, than some of the weakest of the consequent acts of saving faith? In what sense, *perseverance* in faith is necessary to salvation? What sort of

evidence is it which is the principal immediate ground of that assent of the judgment which is implied in saving faith ?

§ 36. The general description of justifying faith is a *proper reception of Christ and his salvation, or a proper active union of the soul to Christ as a saviour*. I say, a *proper reception*, which implies that it is a receiving him in a manner agreeable to his office and character and relation to us, in which he is exhibited and offered to us, and with regard to those ends and effects for which he is given to mankind, was sent into the world, and is appointed to be preached ; and in a manner agreeable to the way in which he is exhibited, made known and offered, *i. e.* by divine revelation, without being exhibited to the view of ourselves ; and the nature of his person, character, offices and benefits ; and the way of salvation, as related to our faculties, mysterious and incomprehensible : and in a manner agreeable to our circumstances, and our particular necessities, and immediate and infinite personal concern with the revelation and offer of the Saviour. An union of soul to this Saviour, and a reception of him and his salvation, which is proper in these respects, is most aptly called by the name of faith. As the *whole* soul, in all its faculties, is the proper subject and agent of faith, so undoubtedly there are two things in saving faith, *viz.* *belief* of the truth, and an answerable *disposition* of heart. And therefore faith may be defined, a thorough believing of what the gospel reveals of a Saviour of sinners, as true and perfectly good, with the exercise of an answerable disposition towards him. That true faith, in the scripture sense of it, implies not only the exercise of the understanding, but of the heart or disposition, is very manifest. Many important things pertaining to saving religion, which the Scripture speaks of under the name of some exercise of the understanding, imply the disposition and exercise of the heart also. Such as, knowing God—understanding the word of God—having eyes to see, and an heart to understand. And piety is called wisdom. So men's wickedness is called ignorance, folly, &c. A being wise in one's own eyes, implies an high opinion of himself, with an agreeable or answerable disposition. For we do not *trust* in any person or thing for any thing but *good*, or what is agreeable to us ; what we choose, incline to, and desire. Yea, trusting commonly is used with respect to great good ; good that we choose, as what we depend upon for support, satisfaction, happiness, &c.

§ 37. Faith is very often in the Scripture called *trust*, especially in the Old Testament. Now, trusting is something more than mere believing. Believing is the assent to any truth testified; trusting, always respects truth that nearly concerns ourselves, in regard of some benefit that it reveals to us. It is the acquiescence of the mind in a belief of any person, who by his word reveals or represents himself to us as the author of some good that concerns us. If the benefit be a *deliverance* or preservation from misery, it is a being easy in a belief that he will do it. So, if we say, a man trusts in a castle to save him from his enemies, we mean, his mind is easy, and *rests* in a persuasion that it will keep him safe. If the benefit be the bestowment of *happiness*, it is the mind's *acquiescing* in it, that he will accomplish it; that is, he is persuaded he will do it; he has such a persuasion, that he rejoices in confidence of it. Thus, if a man has promised a child to make him his heir, if we say the child trusts in him to be made his heir, we mean he has such a *belief* of what he promises, that his mind *acquiesces* and *rejoices* in it, so as not to be disturbed by doubts and questions whether he will perform it. These things all the world means by trust. The first *fruit* of trust is being willing to do and undergo in the expectation of something. He that does not expect the benefit, so much as to make him ready to do or undergo, dares not trust it: He dares not run the venture of it. Therefore, they may be said to trust in Christ, and they only, that are ready to do and undergo all that he desires, in expectation of his redemption. And the faith of those that dare not do so, is unsound. Therefore, such trials are called the trials of faith.

But this is to be considered, that Christ does not promise that he will be the author of our final redemption, but upon condition; and we have not performed that condition, until we have believed. Therefore, the first act of faith is no more than this, the acquiescence of the mind in him in what he does declare absolutely. It is the soul's resting in him, and adhering to him, so far as his word reveals him to all as a Saviour for sinners, as one that has wrought out redemption, as a sufficient Saviour, as a Saviour suited to their case, as a willing Saviour, as the author of an excellent salvation, &c. so as to be encouraged heartily to seek salvation of him, to come to him, to love, desire, and thirst after him as a Saviour, and fly for refuge to him. This is the very same thing in substance, as that trust we spoke of before, and is the very essence of it. If a man offers

another to rescue him from captivity, and carry him to his own country; if the latter *believes* the former will do it, and yet does not *desire* it, he cannot be said to trust in him for it. And if the thing be accounted good, and be believed, yet if the person to whom it is offered, does not like the person that does it, or the way of its accomplishment, there cannot be an entire trust, because there is not a full adherence and acquiescence of mind.

§ 38. The *conditions* of justification are, repentance and faith: and the freedom of grace appears in the forgiving of sin upon repentance, or only for our being willing to part with it, after the same manner as the bestowment of eternal life, only for accepting of it. For to make us an offer of freedom from a thing, only for quitting of it, is equivalent to the offering the possession of a thing for the receiving of it. God makes us this offer, that if we will in our hearts quit sin, we shall be freed from it, and all the evil that belongs to it, and flows from it; which is the same thing as the offering us freedom only for accepting it. Accepting, in this case, is quitting and parting with, in our wills and inclination. So that repentance is implied in faith; it is a part of our willing reception of the salvation of Jesus Christ; though faith with respect to sin, implies something more in it, viz. a respect to Christ, as him by whom we have deliverance. Thus by faith we destroy sin, Gal. ii. 18.

§ 39. As to that question, Whether closing with Christ in his *kingly* office be of the essence of justifying faith? I would say,

1. That accepting Christ in his *kingly* office, is doubtless the proper condition of having an *interest* in his *kingly* office, and so the condition of that salvation which he bestows in the execution of that office; as much as accepting the forgiveness of sins, is the proper condition of the forgiveness of sin. Christ, in his *kingly* office, bestows salvation; and therefore, accepting him in his *kingly* office, by a disposition to sell all and suffer all in duty to Christ, and giving proper respect and honour to him, is the proper condition of salvation. This is manifest by Heb. v. 9. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him;" and by Rom. x. 10. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The apostle speaks of such a confessing of

Christ, or outward and open testifying our respect to him, and adhering in duty to him, as exposes to suffering, reproach and persecution. And that such a disposition and practice is of the essence of saving faith, is manifest by John xii. 42, 43, "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many *believed* on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not *confess* him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God;"—compared with John v. 44. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?"

2. Accepting Christ as a priest and king, cannot be separated. They not only cannot be separated, or be asunder in their subject, but they cannot be considered as separate things in their natures; for they are implied one in another. Accepting Christ as a king, is implied in accepting him as a priest: For, as a priest, he procures a title to the benefits of his kingly office; and therefore, to accept him as a priest, implies an accepting him in his kingly office: For we cannot accept the purchase of his priesthood, but by accepting the benefits purchased. If faith is supposed to contain no more immediately, than only an accepting of Christ as a Mediator for our justification; yet that justification implies a giving a title to the benefits of his kingly office, viz. salvation from sin, and conformity to his nature and will, and actual salvation by actual deliverance from our enemies, and the bestowment of glory.

§ 40. Some have objected against a spiritual sight of divine things in their glorious excellent and divine form, as being the foundation of faith, which is a spiritual conviction of the truth or real *existence* of them; because, say they, the existence of things is in the order of nature *before* forms or qualities of them as excellent or odious: and so the knowledge of their existence must go before the sight of their form or quality; they must be known to be, before they are seen to be excellent.—I answer, It is true, things must be known to be, before they are known to be excellent, if by this proposition be understood, that things must be known really to exist, before they can be known really to exist with such and such beauty. And all the force of the objection depends on such a meaning of this assertion. But if thereby be intended, that a thing must be known to have a *real existence* before the person has a *clear understanding, idea or apprehension, of the*

thing proposed or objected to his view, as it is in its qualities either odious or beautiful, then the assertion is not true; for his having a clear idea of something proposed to his understanding or view, as very beautiful or very odious, as is proposed, does not *presuppose* its *reality*. But, in our way of understanding things in general of all kinds, we first have some understanding or view of the thing in its qualities, before we know its existence. Thus it is in things that we know by our external senses, by our bodily sight for instance. We first see them, or have a clear idea of them by our sight, before we know their existence by our sight. We first see the sun, and have a strong, lively and clear idea of it in its qualities, its shape, its brightness, &c. before we know there actually exists such a body.

§ 41. It is observable, that as trusting in God, hoping in him, waiting for him, &c. are abundantly insisted on in the Old Testament, as the main *condition* of God's favour, protection, deliverance and salvation, in the book of Psalms and elsewhere; so, in most of those places where these graces of trust and hope are so insisted upon, the subjects of them are represented as being in a state of trial, trouble, difficulty, danger, opposition, and oppression of enemies, and the like. And the clearer revelation, and more abundant light of the New Testament, bring into clearer view the state that all mankind are in with regard to those things that are invisible, the invisible God, an invisible world, and invisible enemies, and so shew men's lost, miserable, captivated dangerous and helpless state, and reveal the infinite mercy of God, and his glorious all-sufficiency to such wretched, helpless creatures, and also exhibit Christ in the character of the Saviour of the miserable, the great Redeemer of captives, &c. Hence faith, trust and hope, are most fitly insisted on as the *duty* and *qualification* peculiarly proper for all mankind, and the virtue proper to be exercised in their circumstances towards God and Christ, as they reveal themselves in the gospel, as belonging to them in their character and relation to us, and concern with us, in which they are there exhibited; and as the grand condition of our salvation, or our receiving those benefits, which we, as sinful, miserable and helpless creatures, need from them, and which Christ, as a Redeemer, appears ready to bestow.

§ 42. Dr. Manton reconciles the apostle James and the

apostle Paul in the following manner, in his 5th volume of Sermons, p. 274.—“Justification hath respect to some *accusation*: Now, as there is a twofold law, there is a twofold accusation and justification; the law of works, and the law of grace. Now, when we are accused as breakers of the law of works, that is, as sinners obnoxious to the wrath of God, we plead Christ’s satisfaction as our righteousness, no works of our own. But when we are accused as non-performers of the conditions of the covenant of grace, as being neglectors and “rejectors of Christ the Mediator, we are justified by producing our faith or sincere obedience; so that our righteousness by the new covenant is subordinate to our universal righteousness, with respect to the great law of God; and that we have only by Christ. If we are charged that we have broken the first covenant, the covenant of works, we alledge Christ’s satisfaction and merit. If charged not to have performed the conditions of the law of grace, we answer it by producing our faith, repentance and new obedience, and so shew it to be a false charge. Our first and supreme righteousness consists in the pardon of our sins, and our acceptance in the Beloved, and our right to impunity and glory. Our second and subordinate righteousness, in having the true condition of pardon and life. In the first sense, Christ’s righteousness alone is our justification and righteousness. Faith and repentance, or new obedience, is not the least part of it. But in the second, believing, repenting and obeying, is our righteousness in their several respective ways, viz. that the righteousness of Christ may be ours, and continue ours.”—See also *Dr. Manton on James*, p. 310, 311, 312, and p. 331, &c.

§ 43. The very *acceptance* of Christ in his priestly office, making atonement for sin by his blood, and fulfilling the law of God by his perfect obedience unto death—and so the very *approbation* of the attribute of God, as it is there exhibited, an infinite holy mercy—thoroughly secures holiness of heart and life in the redeemed of Jesus Christ. Acceptance and approbation will secure their conformity to the law of God, though, by this very mercy, and this very Saviour, they are set at liberty from the law, and are no longer under the law, as a law with its sanctions immediately taking hold of them, and binding them by its sanctions or threatenings, connecting and binding together its fulfilment and life, and its violation and

death. Our heart approving of that holy mercy of God, which appears in the shewing mercy to sinners—in a way of perfectly satisfying the law, suffering all its penalty, and perfectly fulfilling and answering its precepts—implies an heart fully approving the *law itself*, as most worthy to be fulfilled and satisfied, the authority that established the law, and to its infinite worthiness of being obeyed. It implies a heart entirely detesting sin, and in some sort sensible of the infinite detestableness of it, that we approve of God's making such a manifestation of his detestation of it, and approve of the declared fitness and necessity of its being punished with so great a punishment as the sufferings of Christ. Our accepting such sufferings as an atonement for our sin, implies a heart fully repenting of, and renouncing sin; for it implies not only a conviction that we deserve so great a punishment, and not only a mere conviction of conscience, but an approbation of heart of the connexion of such sin with such punishment, which implies an hatred of the sin punished. And the heart's entire approbation of such methods perfectly to fulfil the obedience of the law, by so great a person, and by his doing so great things, and denying himself so much, implies a very high approbation of this law, and authority of the law-giver. Therefore, this acceptance of Christ as a Saviour, by his obedience and atonement, and an acceptance of God's holy mercy forgiving sin, and giving life in this way, does well secure *universal obedience* to the law of God as a law of liberty, and with a free and ingenuous spirit, by the obedience of children, and not of slaves. Thus, the faith that justifies the sinner, destroys sin; and the heart is purified.

§ 44. It is said, "Whosoever *believeth* that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;" by which it is manifest, that there was some *great virtue* that the apostles and Christians in those days used to call by the name of *faith* or *believing*, believing that Jesus is Christ, and the like; which was a thing very peculiar and distinguishing, and belonging only to those that were born of God. Thereby cannot be meant, therefore, only a *mere assent* to the doctrines of the gospel, because that is common to saints and sinners, as is very evident. The apostle James plainly teaches in chap. ii. that *this faith* may be in those who are not in a state of salvation. And we read in the Evangelists, of many that in this sense believed, to whom Christ did not commit himself, because he knew what was in them, John ii. at the latter end, and many other

places. When it is said, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;" thereby cannot be meant, whosoever has such an *assent* as is perfect, so as to exclude all remaining unbelief; for it is evident, that the faith of good men does not do this. Thus, a true believer said, Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief:" and Christ is often reproving his true disciples, that they have so little faith. He often says to them, "O ye of little faith;" and speaks sometimes as if their faith were less than a grain of mustard seed. Nor can the apostle, when he says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God," mean, that whosoever has a predominant assent, or an assent that prevails above his dissent, or whose judgment preponderates that way, and has more weight in that scale than the other; because it is plain that it is not true that every one that believes in this sense, is born of God. Many natural unregenerate men, have such a preponderating judgment of the truth of gospel doctrines; without it, there is no belief of it at all. For believing, in the lowest sense, implies a preponderating judgment; but it is evident, as just now observed, that many natural men believe: they judge that the doctrine is true, as the devils do. And again, when the apostle says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;" he does not mean, he that believes or *assents* that Jesus is the Christ, to such a certain *degree* is born of God; but that whosoever at all performs that act which the apostle calls by that name, or whosoever has any thing at all of *that kind* of virtue the apostle calls *believing*, is born of God, and that he that is not born of God, has not that virtue that he meant, but is wholly without it. And besides, it would be unreasonable to suppose, that by this believing, which the apostle there and elsewhere lays down as such a grand note of distinction between those that are born of God, and those that are not, is meant only a certain *degree of assent*. If this was the apostle's meaning, he would use words in a manner not consistent with the use of language, as he would call things nearly *alike* by such distant and *contrary* names; and would represent the subjects in whom they are, as of such different and contrary characters, calling one believer, and the other unbeliever, one the children of God, and those that are born of God, and the other the children of the devil, as this apostle calls all that are not born of God, in this epistle, (see chap. iii. 9, 10.) and would represent one as setting to his seal that God is true, and the other as making him a liar, as in the

10th verse of the context. And besides, if believers in this sense only, with such an infinitely small gradual difference, was all that he meant, it would be no such notable distinction between those that are born of God, and those that are not, as this apostle, and other apostles, every where signify. Nay, it would not be fit to be used as a sign or characteristic for men to distinguish themselves by: for such minute gradual differences, which in this case would be alone certainly distinguishing, are altogether undiscernible, or at least with great difficulty determined; therefore, are not to be given as distinguishing notes of the Christian character.

§ 45. If words are every where used after this manner in the Bible, and, by faith in Christ, as the word is generally used there, is meant only the assent of the understanding, and that not merely a predominant assent, nor yet a perfect assent, excluding all remaining unbelief, but only a certain *degree* of assent between these two, rising up just to such a precise height, so that he that has this shall everywhere be called a believer; and he whose assent, though it predominates also, and rises up as high as the other within an infinitely little, shall be called an unbeliever, one that wickedly makes God a liar, &c.; this is in effect to use words without any determinate meaning at all or, which is the same thing, any meaning proportioned to our understandings; therefore, there is undoubtedly some great and notable difference between the faith of those who are in a state of salvation, and that of those who are not: insomuch that, without that very faith, according to the common use of language in these days, those who were not in a state of salvation, may be said not to believe at all. And besides, that virtue which the apostle speaks of as such a great and distinguishing note of a child of God, he plainly speaks of as a supernatural thing, as something not in natural men, but given only in regeneration or being born of God which is the great change of men from that which is natural to that which is supernatural. Men have what is natural, by their being born in a natural way; but they have what is supernatural, by being born of God. But says the apostle, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." The same faith is plainly spoken of as a supernatural thing in the foregoing chapter, verse 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

§ 46. But common faith is not a supernatural thing, any more than a belief of any history. It is obtained by the same means. If one be natural, and the other supernatural, then undoubtedly the difference is not only such a gradual difference, differing but an infinitely little. If all lies in the degree of assent let us suppose that a thousand degrees of assent be required to salvation, and that there is no difference in *kind* in the faith of others. How unreasonable is it to say, that when a man can naturally raise his assent to nine hundred and ninety-nine degrees, yet he cannot reach the other degree, by any improvement, but there must be a new birth in order to the other degree! And as it is thus evident, that the faith or believing that Jesus is the Christ, which the apostle speaks of in the text, is some virtue intended by the apostle, differing not only in degree, but in nature and kind, from any faith that unregenerate men have; so I would observe, that this special faith, of which the apostle speaks, that so differs from common faith, is not only a faith that some Christians only have obtained, but *all* have it who are in a state of salvation; because the same faith is often spoken of as that which first brings men into a state of salvation, and not merely as that which Christians attain to afterwards. How often are we taught, that it is by faith in Christ we are justified; and that he that believes not, is in a state of condemnation; and that it is by this men pass from a state of condemnation to a state of salvation. Compare John v. 21. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life;" with chapter iii. 18. "He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." And this faith that brings into a state of life, is thus expressed, John xx. 31. "But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." Thus it is manifest, that the faith spoken of in such texts, is the faith that all men have who are in a state of salvation, and the faith by which they first come into salvation: and that it is a faith especially differing in *nature* and *kind* from all common faith.

§ 47. That there is some kind of *difference* or other, is most apparent from the vast distinction made in scripture, in-somuch that those who have *faith*, are all from time to

time spoken of as *justified*, and in a state of *salvation*, having a title to *eternal life*, &c. Rom. 19, 17. "The gospel is the power of God to *salvation* to every one *that believeth*." And chap. iii. 22. "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon *all that believe*." Rom. x. 4. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one *that believeth*." Acts xiii. 39. "And by him all that *believe* are *justified*." In these and other places, a state of salvation is predicted of every one that believeth or hath faith. And by the supposition, they that have no saving faith are in a state of damnation; as it is also expressly said in Scripture, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." and the like. So that it is evident that there is a great difference between the virtue that the Scripture calls by the name *faith*, and speaks of as saving faith, let it be what it will, and all that is or can be in others. The difference must either be in the *degree of faith*, and in the *effects* of it, or it is in the *nature of the faith* itself.

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 § 49. It is not merely a difference in *degree*. Mat. xvi. 15—17. "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? and Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." This must evidently be understood of a *supernatural* way of coming by this belief or faith; such a way as is greatly distinguished from instruction or judgment in other matters, such as the wise and prudent in temporal things had. So Luke x. 21, 22. "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." So, to the same purpose is John vi. 44. 45. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they all shall be taught of God: Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." And what is meant, is not merely that God gives it in his *providence*; for so he gives the knowledge of those wise and prudent men mentioned in the forecited passage. It is said, that he gives

it by the teaching of his *Spirit*, as appears by 1 Cor. xii. 2. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." And the common influences of the Spirit, such as natural men may have, are not meant, as appears by what the same apostle says in the same epistle, chap. ii. 14. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The things of the Spirit of God, to which the apostle has a special respect, are the doctrine of Christ crucified, as appears by the beginning of the chapter, and by the foregoing chapter, which he says is to the Jews a *stumbling* block, and to the Greeks foolishness. And, that the influence of the Spirit, in which this saving faith is given, is not any *common influence*, or any thing like it, but is that influence by which men are God's workmanship, or made new creatures, is evident, by Ephesians ii. 8, 9, 10. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." And what makes the argument yet more clear and demonstrative is, that it is mentioned as one of the distinguishing characters of saving faith, that it is the faith of the operation of God; Col. ii. 12. "You are risen with him through the *faith of the operation of God*, who hath raised him from the dead." Now, would this faith be any *distinguishing* character of the true Christian, if it were not a faith of a *different kind* from that which others may have? Now, is it reasonable to suppose, that such *distinctions* as these would be taught, as taking place between *saving* faith and *common* faith, if there were no *essential* difference, but only a gradual difference, and they approached infinitely near to each other?

§ 49. The distinguishing epithets and *characters* ascribed to *saving* faith in Scripture, are such as denote the difference to be in *nature* and *kind*, and not in degree only. One distinguishing epithet is *precious*; 2 Peter i. 1. "Like precious faith with us." Now, preciousness is what signifies more properly something of the *quality*, than of the *degree*. As preciousness in gold is more properly the designation of the quality of that kind of substance, than the quantity. And therefore, when gold is tried in the fire to see whether it be true gold or not, it is not the quantity of the substance that is tried by the fire, but the *precious nature* of the substance. So it is when

faith is tried to see whether it be a saving faith or not. 1 Pet. i. 7. "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." If the trial was not of the nature and kind, but only of the *quantity* of faith; how exceedingly improper would be the comparison between the trial of faith and the trial of gold? Another distinguishing Scripture note of saving faith is, that it is the *faith of Abraham*. Rom. iv. 16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the *faith of Abraham*, who is the father of us all." Now, the faith of Abraham cannot be faith of that degree of which Abraham's was; for undoubtedly multitudes are in a state of salvation, that have not that eminency of faith. Therefore, nothing can be meant by the faith of Abraham, but faith of the *same nature and kind*. Again, another distinguishing Scripture note of saving faith is, that it is faith *unfeigned*. 1 Tim. i. 5. "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of *faith unfeigned*." 2 Tim. i. 5. "When I call to remembrance the *unfeigned faith* that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." Now this is an epithet that denotes the *nature* of a thing, and not the degree of it. A thing may be *unfeigned*, and yet be but to a *small degree*. To be *unfeigned*, is to be really a thing of that nature and kind, which it pretends to be; and not a false appearance, or mere resemblance of it. Again, another note of distinction between saving faith and common faith, plainly implied in Scripture, is, that it *differs* from the *faith of devils*. It is implied in James ii. 18, 19. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well: *the devils also believe and tremble*." Here it is first implied, that there is a *difference* between saving faith and common, that may be shewn by *works*; a difference in the *cause*, that may be shewn by the *effects*; and then it is implied this difference lies in something wherein it *differs* from the *faith of devils*; otherwise there is no force in the apostle's reasoning. But this difference cannot lie in the degree of the assent of the understanding; for the devils have as high a degree of assent as the real Christian.

The difference then must lie in the peculiar nature of the faith.

§ 49. That the difference between *common* faith and *saving* faith does not lie in the degree only, but in the *nature* and *essence* of it, appears by this; that those who are in a state of damnation are spoken of as being wholly destitute of that sort of faith which the saints have. They are spoken of as those who *believe not*, and having the gospel hid from them, being blind with regard to this light; as 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which *believe not*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Now, can these things be said with any propriety, of such as are lost in general, if many of them as well as the saved, have the *same sort* of faith, but only in a less degree, and some of them falling short in degree, but very little, perhaps one degree in a million? how can it be proper to speak of the others, so little excelling them in the degree of the same light, as having the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining unto them, and beholding as with open face the glory of the Lord, as is said of all true believers in the context? while those are spoken of as having the gospel hid from them, their minds blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them, and so as being lost, or in a state of damnation? Such interpretations of Scripture are unreasonable.

§ 50. That the difference between saving faith and common faith is not in degree, but in *nature* and *kind*, appears from this, that, in the Scripture, saving faith, when *weakest*, and attended with very great doubts, yet is said *never to fail*. Luke xxii. 31, 32. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith *fail not*; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The faith of Peter was attended with very great *doubts* concerning Christ and his cause. Now, if the distinction between saving and other faith be only in the degree of assent, whereby a man was brought fully to assent to the truth, and to cease greatly to question it; then Peter's faith would have failed. He would have been without any saving faith. For he greatly questioned the truth concerning Christ and his kingdom,

especially when he denied him. Other disciples did so too; for they all forsook him and fled. Therefore it follows, that there is something peculiar in the *very nature* of saving faith, that remains in times even of the greatest doubt, and even at those times distinguishes it from all common faith.

§ 51. Saving faith does not consist only in the difference of *effects*. The supposition that I would *disprove* is this, that there is no difference between saving faith and common faith as to their nature; but all the difference lies in this, that in him who is in a state of salvation, faith produces *another effect*; it works another way; it produces a settled determination of mind, to walk in a way of universal and persevering obedience. In the unregenerate, although his faith be the *same* with that of the regenerate, and he has the *same assent* of his understanding to the truths of the gospel, yet it does not prove effectual to bring him to such a resolution and answerable practice. In opposition to this notion, I would observe,

1. That it is contrary to the reason of mankind, to suppose different effects, without any difference in the cause. It has ever been counted to be good reasoning from the effect to the cause; and it is a way of reasoning to which common sense leads mankind. But if, from a different effect, there is no arguing any difference in the cause, this way of reasoning must be given up. If there be a difference in the effect, that does not arise from some difference in the cause, then there is something in the effect that proceeds not from its cause, viz. that diversity; because there is no diversity in the cause to answer it: Therefore that diversity must arise from nothing, and consequently is no effect of any thing; which is contrary to the supposition. So this hypothesis is at once reduced to a contradiction. If there be a difference in the effect, that difference must arise from something: and that which it arises from, let it be what it will, must be the cause of it. And if faith be the cause of this diversity in the effect, as is supposed, then I would ask, What is there in faith, that can be the *cause* of this diversity, seeing there is no diversity in the faith to answer it? To say that the diversity of the effect arises from likeness or sameness in the cause, is a gross and palpable absurdity; and is as much as to say, that difference is produced by no difference: which is the same thing as to say, that nothing produces something.

2. If there were a difference in the effects of faith,

no difference in the faith itself, then no difference of faith could be shewed by the effects. But that is contrary to Scripture, and particularly to James ii. 18. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." The apostle can mean nothing else by this, than that I will shew thee by my works that I have a *right sort* of faith. I will shew thee that my faith is a better faith than that of those who have no works. I will shew thee the difference of the *causes*, by the difference of the *effect*. This the apostle thought good arguing. Christ thought it was proper to argue the difference of the *tree* from the difference of the *fruit*; Matt. xii. 33. "A tree is known by its fruit." How can this be, when there is no difference in the tree? and if there is no difference in the faith that is the cause, then certainly no difference can be shewn by the effects. When we see two human bodies, and see actions performed and works produced by the one, and not by the other, we determine that there is an internal difference in the bodies themselves: We conclude that one is alive, and the other dead; that one has an operative nature, an active spirit in it, and that the other has none; which is a very essential difference in the *causes* themselves. Just so we argue an essential difference between a saving and common faith, by the works or effects produced; as the apostle in that context observes, in the last verse of the chapter, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so *faith* without works is *dead* also."

§ 52. There is, in the nature and essence of saving faith, a receiving of the object of faith, not only in the *assent* of the judgment, but with the *heart*, or with the inclination and will of the soul; as is evident by 2 Thess. ii. 10. "Received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." And the apostle, describing the nature of saving faith, from the example of the ancient patriarchs, Heb. xi. describes their faith thus, verse 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises; but, having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and *embraced* them." And so the evangelist John calls faith a *receiving* of Christ; John i. 12. "But as many as *received* him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Here, the apostle expressly declares, that he whom he means by a receiver, was the same with a believer on Christ, or one that has saving faith. And what else can be meant by *receiving* Christ, or

accepting him, than an accepting of him in heart? It is not a taking him with the hand, or any external taking or accepting him, but the acceptance of the mind. The acceptance of the mind is the act of the mind towards an object as acceptable, but that in a special manner, as the act of the inclination or will. And it is farther evident, that saving faith has its seat not only in the speculative understanding or judgment, but in the heart or will; because otherwise, it is not properly of the nature of a virtue or any part of the moral goodness of the mind. For virtue has its special and immediate seat in the *will*; and that qualification, that is not at all seated there, though it be a cause of virtue, or an effect of it, yet is not properly any virtue of the mind, nor can properly be in itself a moral qualification, or any fulfilment of a moral rule. But it is evident, that saving faith is one of the chief virtues of a saint, one of the greatest virtues prescribed in the moral law of God. Matt. xxiii. 23. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithes of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of *the law*, judgment, mercy, and *faith*: these ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone." It is a principal duty that God required, John vi. 28, 29. "Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the *work* of God, that ye *believe* on him whom God hath sent." 1 John iii. 23. "And this is his *commandment*, that ye *believe* on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." And therefore it is called most *holy* faith, Jude 20. But if it be not seated in the *will*, it is no more an *holy* faith, than the faith of devils. That it is most holy, implies, that it is one thing wherein Christian holiness principally consists.

§ 53. An objection may be raised against this, viz. that the words, *faith* and *believing*, in common language, signify no more than the *assent* of the understanding. I answer,

1. It is not at all strange, that in matters of divinity and of the gospel of Christ, which are so exceedingly diverse from the common concerns of life, and so much above them, some words should be used in somewhat of a peculiar sense. The languages used among the nations of the world, were not *first framed* to express the spiritual and supernatural things of the gospel of Christ, but the common concerns of human life. Hence it comes to pass, that language in its common use, is not exactly adapted to express things of this nature: so that

there is a necessity, that when the phrases of common speech are adopted into the gospel of Christ, they should some of them be used in a sense somewhat diverse from the most ordinary use of them in temporal concerns. Words were first devised to signify the more ordinary concerns of life: Hence, men find a necessity, even in order to express many things in human arts and sciences, to use words in something of a peculiar sense; the sense being somewhat varied from their more ordinary use; and the very same words, as terms of art, do not signify exactly the same thing that they do in common speech. This is well known to be the case in innumerable instances; because the concerns of the arts and sciences are so diverse from the common concerns of life, that unless some phrases were adopted out of common language, and their signification something varied, there would be no words at all to be found to signify such and such things pertaining to those arts. But the things of the gospel of Christ are vastly more diverse from the common concerns of life, than the things of human arts and sciences: those being heavenly things, and of the most spiritual and sublime nature possible, and most diverse from earthly things. Hence the use of words in *common* language, must not be looked upon as an *universal rule* to determine the signification of words in the gospel: but the rule is the use of words in *Scripture* language. What is found in fact to be the use of words in the Bible, by comparing one place with another, that must determine the sense in which we must understand them.

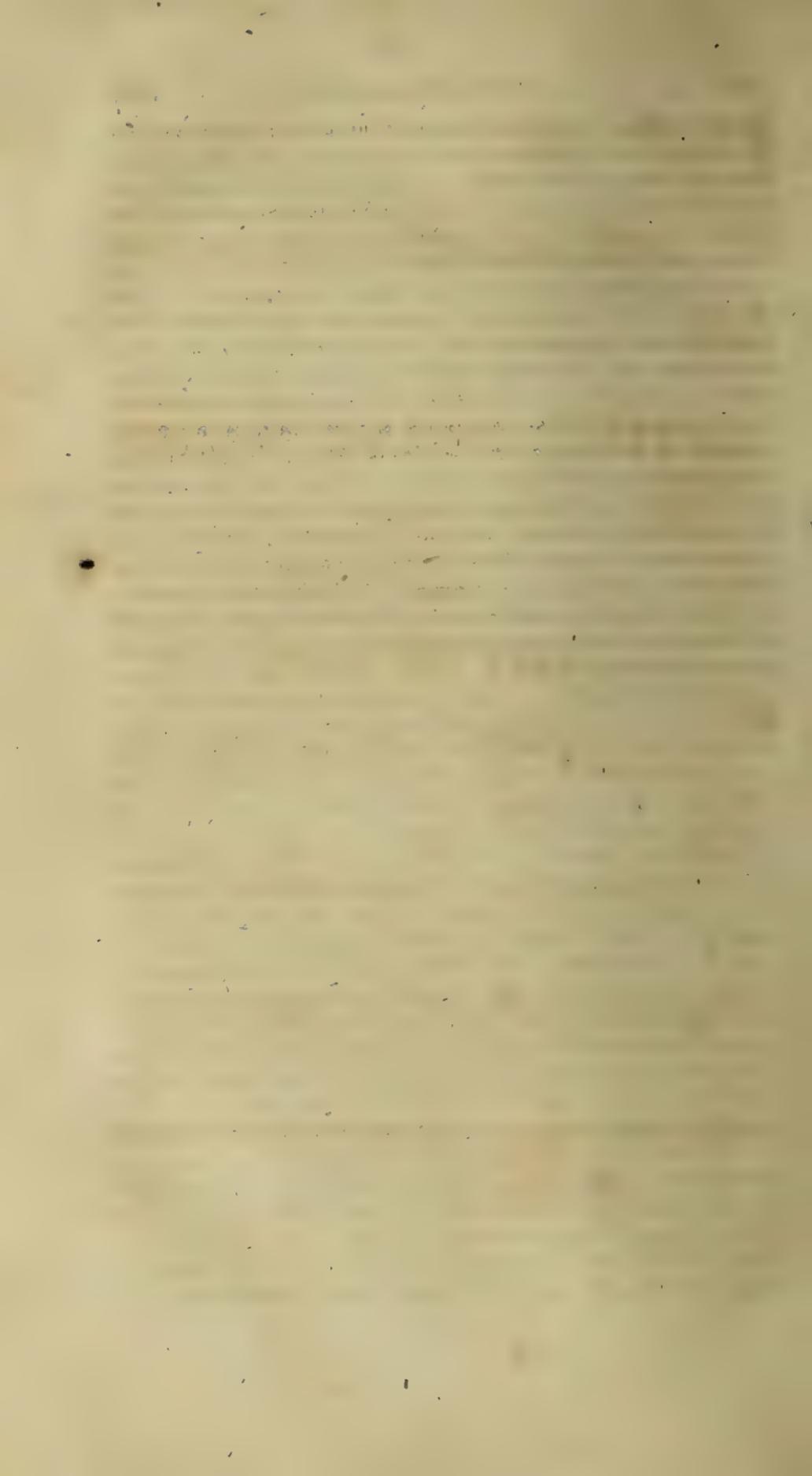
2. The words in the original, translated faith, and believing, such as πιστις; πιστευω, πεπεισμεν, and πεπεισθησθε, as often used in *common* language, implied more than the mere assent of the understanding. They were often used to signify affiance or trusting; which implies an act of the *will*, as well as of the understanding. It implies, that the thing believed is received as good and agreeable, as well as true. For trusting always relates to some good sought and aimed at in our trust; and therefore evermore implies the acceptance of the *heart*, and the embracing of the inclination, and desire of the soul. And therefore, trusting in Christ for salvation, implies, that he and his redemption, and those things wherein his salvation consists, are agreeable and acceptable to us.

3. Supposing saving faith to be what Calvinistical divines have ordinarily supposed it to be, there seems to be no one word in common language, so fit to express it, as *faith*, or πιστις, as it most commonly is in the original. Orthodox divines,

in the definitions of faith, do not all use exactly the same terms, but they generally come to the same thing. Their distinctions generally signify as much as a person's receiving Christ and his salvation as revealed in the gospel, with his whole soul; acquiescing in what is exhibited as true, excellent, and sufficient for him. And to express this complex act of the mind, I apprehend no word can be found more significant than *faith*, which signifies both assenting and consenting. The object of the act is wholly supernatural, and above the reach of mere reason, and therefore exhibited only by revelation and divine testimony; and the person to be believed in, is exhibited and offered in that revelation, especially under the character of a Saviour, and so, as an object of trust: and the benefits are all spiritual, invisible, wonderful and future. If this be the true account of faith, beware how you entertain any such doctrine, as that there is no essential difference between common and saving faith; and that both consist in a mere assent of the understanding to the doctrines of religion. That this doctrine is false, appears by what has been said; and if it be false, it must needs be dangerous. Saving faith is abundantly insisted on in the Bible, as in a peculiar manner the condition of salvation; being the thing by which we are justified.

How much is that doctrine insisted on in the New Testament! We are said to be "justified by faith, and by faith alone: By faith we are saved; and this is the work of God, that we believe on him whom he hath sent: The just shall live by faith: We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ: He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Therefore, doubtless, saving faith, whatsoever that be, is the grand condition of an interest in Christ, and his great salvation. And if it be so, of what vast importance is it, that we should have right notions of what it is? for certainly no one thing whatever, nothing in religion is of greater importance, than that which teaches us how we may be saved. If salvation itself be of infinite importance, then it is of equal importance that we do not mistake the terms of it; and if this be of infinite importance, then that doctrine that teaches that to be the term, that is not so, but very diverse, is infinitely dangerous. What we want a revelation from God for chiefly, is, to teach us the terms of his favour, and the way of salvation. And that which the revelation God has given us in the Bible teaches to be the way, is *faith in Christ*. Therefore, that doctrine that teaches something else to be saving faith, that is essentially

another thing, teaches entirely another way of salvation : and therefore such doctrine does in effect make void the revelation we have in the Bible ; as it makes void the special end of it, which is to teach us the true way of salvation. The gospel is the revelation of the way of life by faith in Christ. Therefore, he who teaches something else to be that faith, which is essentially diverse from what the gospel of Christ teaches, he teaches another gospel ; and he does in effect teach another religion than the religion of Christ. For what is religion, but that way of exercising our respect to God, which is the term of his favour and acceptance to a title to eternal rewards ? The Scripture teaches this, in a special manner, to be saving faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, he that teaches another faith instead of this, teaches another religion. Such doctrine as I have opposed, must be destructive and directly tending to man's damnation ; leading such as embrace it, to rest in something essentially different from the grand condition of salvation. And therefore, I would advise you, as you would have any regard to your own soul's salvation and to the salvation of your posterity, to beware of such doctrine as this.



THE
DISTINGUISHING MARKS

OF A WORK

OF THE

SPIRIT OF GOD,

APPLIED TO THAT UNCOMMON OPERATION THAT HAS LATELY APPEARED
ON THE MINDS OF MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN NEW-ENGLAND :

WITH A

PARTICULAR CONSIDERATION

OF THE

*EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES WITH WHICH THIS WORK IS
ATTENDED.*

MR. COOPER'S PREFACE

TO THE READER.

THERE are several *dispensations*, or days of grace, which the Church of God has been under from the beginning of time. There is that under the ancient Patriarchs; that under the Law of Moses; and there is that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, under which we now are. This is the brightest day that ever shone, and exceeds the other, for peculiar advantages. To us who are so happy as to live under the Evangelical Dispensation, may those words of our Saviour be directed, which he spake to his disciples, when he was first setting up the Messiah's Kingdom in the world, and Gospel-light and power began to spread abroad: "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see. For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them*."

The *Mosaic* Dispensation, though darkened with types and figures, yet far exceeded the former: But the Gospel Dispensation so much exceeds in glory, that it eclipses the glory of the Legal, as the stars disappear when the sun ariseth, and goeth forth in his strength.—And the chief thing that renders the Gospel so glorious is, that it is the Ministration of the Spirit. Under the preaching of it, the Holy Spirit was to be poured out in more plentiful measures; not only in miraculous gifts, as in the first times of the Gospel, but in his internal saving operations, accompanying the outward ministry, to produce numerous conversions to Christ, and give spiritual life to souls that were before dead in trespasses and sins, and so prepare them for eternal life. Thus the apostle speaks, when he runs a comparison between the old Testament and the new, the Law of Moses, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ; "For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious †."

This blessed time of the *Gospel*, hath several other denominations, which may raise our esteem and value for it. It is called by the evangelical Prophet §, "The acceptable year of the Lord." Or, as it may be read, *the year of liking*, or of benevolence, or of the good will of the Lord; because it would be the special period in which he would display his grace and favour, in an extraordinary manner, and deal out spiritual blessings with

* Luke x. 23, 24.

† 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 8.

§ Isa. lxi. 2.

a full and liberal hand.—It is also stiled by our Saviour, the *Regeneration**, which may refer not only to that glorious restitution of all things, which is looked for at the close of the Christian Dispensation, but to the renewing work of grace in particular souls, carried on from the beginning to the end of it. But few were renewed and sanctified under the former dispensations, compared with the instances of the grace of God in Gospel-times. Such numbers were brought into the Gospel Church when it was first set up, as to give occasion for that pleasing admiring question, which was indeed a prophecy of it †, “Who are these that fly as a cloud? And as the doves to their windows?” Then the power of the divine Spirit so accompanied the ministry of the word, as that thousands were converted under one sermon.—But notwithstanding this large effusion of the Spirit, when Gospel-light first dawned upon the world—that pleasant Spring of religion which then appeared on the face of the earth—there was a gradual withdrawing of his saving light and influences; and so the gospel came to be less successful, and the state of Christianity withered in one place and another.

Indeed at the time of the *Reformation* from Popery, when Gospel light broke in upon the Church, and dispelled the clouds of Anti-christian darkness that covered it, the power of divine grace so accompanied the preaching of the word, as that it had admirable success in the conversion and edification of souls; and the blessed fruits thereof appeared in the hearts and lives of its professors. That was one of “the days of the Son of man,” on which the exalted Redeemer rode forth, in his glory and majesty, on the white horse of the pure Gospel, “conquering and to conquer;” and the bow in his hand, like that of Jonathan, returned not empty. But what a dead and barren time has it now been, for a great while, with all the Churches of the Reformation? The golden showers have been restrained; the influences of the Spirit suspended; and the consequence has been, that the Gospel has not had any eminent success: Conversions have been rare and dubious; few sons and daughters have been born to God; and the hearts of christians not so quickened, warmed and refreshed under the ordinances, as they have been.

That this has been the sad state of religion among us in this land, for many years (except one or two distinguished places, which have at times been visited with a shower of mercy, while other towns and churches have not been rained upon) will be acknowledged by all who have spiritual senses exercised, as it has been lamented by faithful ministers and serious christians. Accordingly it has been a constant petition in our public prayers, from Sabbath to Sabbath, “That God would pour out his Spirit upon us, and revive his work in the midst of the years.” And besides our annual fast-days appointed by Government, most of the Churches have set apart days, wherein to seek the Lord by prayer and fasting, that he would “come and rain down righteousness upon us.”

And now,—“Behold! the Lord whom we have sought, has suddenly come to his temple.” The dispensation of grace we are now under, is certainly such as neither we nor our fathers have seen; and in some circumstances so wonderful, that I believe there has not been the like since the extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit immediately after our Lord’s ascension. The Apostolical Times seem to have returned upon us: Such a display has

* Matt. xix. 28.

† Isa. lx.

there been of the power and grace of the divine Spirit in the assemblies of his people, and such testimonies has he given to the word of the Gospel.

I remember a remarkable passage of the late Reverend and learned Mr. HOWE, which I think it may be worth while to transcribe here. It is in his Discourse concerning the "the prosperous state of the Christian Church before the end of time, by a plentiful effusion of the holy Spirit," page 80. "In such a time," says he "when the Spirit shall be poured forth plentifully, surely ministers shall have their proportionable share. And when such a time as that shall come, I believe you will hear much other kind of sermons (or they will who shall live to such a time) than you are wont to do now a days: Souls will surely be dealt with at another rate. It is plain, says he, too sadly plain, there is a great retraction of the Spirit of God even from us. We know not how to speak living sense into souls; how to get within you: Our words die in our mouths, or drop and die between you and us. We even faint when we speak; long-experienced unsuccessfulness makes us despond: We speak not as persons that hope to prevail, that expect to make you serious, heavenly, mindful of God, and to walk more like christians. The methods of alluring and convincing souls, even that some of us have known, are lost from amongst us in a great part. There have been other ways taken, than we can tell now how to fall upon, far the mollifying of the obdurate, and the awakening of the secure, and the convincing and persuading of the obstinate, and the winning of the disaffected. Surely there will be a large share, that will come even to the part of ministers, when such an effusion of the Spirit shall be, as it is expected: That they shall know how to speak to better purpose, with more compassion, with more seriousness, with more authority and allurements than we now find we can."

Agreeable to the just expectation of this great and excellent man, we have found it in this remarkable day. A number of *preachers* have appeared among us, to whom God has given such a large measure of his Spirit, that we are ready sometimes to apply to them the character given of Barnabas, that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith." They preach the gospel of the grace of God from place to place, with uncommon zeal and assiduity. The doctrines they insist on, are the doctrines of the reformation, under the influence whereof the power of godliness so flourished in the last century. The points on which their preaching mainly turns, are those important ones of man's guilt; corruption and impotence: supernatural regeneration by the Spirit of God; and free justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; and the marks of the new birth.—The manner of their preaching is not with the enticing words of man's wisdom: How be it, they speak wisdom among them that are perfect. An ardent love to Christ and souls, warms their breasts, and animates their labours. God has made those his ministers active Spirits, a flame of fire in his service: And his word in their mouths has been "as a fire; and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." In most places where they have laboured, God has evidently wrought with them, and "confirmed the word by signs following." Such a power and presence of God in religious assemblies, has not been known since God set up his sanctuary amongst us. He has indeed "glorified the house of his glory."

This work is truly extraordinary, in respect of its *extent*. It is more or

less in the several provinces that measure many hundred miles on this continent. "He sendeth forth his commandment on earth? his word runneth very swiftly." It has entered and spread in some of the most populous Towns, the chief places of concourse and business. And,—blessed be God!—it has visited the seats of learning, both here, and in a neighbouring colony. O may the holy Spirit constantly reside in them both, seize our devoted youth, and form them as polished shafts, successfully to fight the Lord's battles against the powers of darkness, when they shall be called out to service!—It is extraordinary also with respect to the *numbers* that have been the subjects of this operation. Stupid sinners have been awakened by hundreds; and the enquiry has been general in some places, "what must I do to be saved?" I verily believe, that in this our Metropolis, there were the last winter some thousands under such religious impressions as they never felt before.

The work has been remarkable also for the *various sorts* of persons that have been under its influence.—These have been of *all ages*. Some *elderly* persons have been snatched as brands out of the burning, made monuments of divine mercy, and born to God, though out of due time; as the apostle speaks in his own case*. But here, with us, it has lain mostly among the young. Sprightly youth have been made to bow like willows to the Redeemer's sceptre, and willingly to subscribe with their own hands to the Lord. And out of the mouths of babes, some little children, has God ordained to himself praise, to still the enemy and the avenger.—They have also been of all *ranks* and *degrees*. Some of the great and rich; but more of the low and poor.—Of other countries and nations. Ethiopia has stretched out her hand: Some poor *Negroes* have, I trust, been brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God.—Of all *qualities* and *conditions*. The most *ignorant*; the foolish things of the world, babes in knowledge, have been made wise unto salvation, and taught those heavenly truths, which have been hid from the wise and prudent. Some of the *learned* and knowing among men, have had those things revealed to them of the Father in heaven, which flesh and blood do not teach: And of these, some who had gone into the modern notions, and had no other than the polite religion, of the present times, have had their prejudices conquered, their carnal reasonings overcome, and their understandings made to bow to gospel mysteries; they now receive the truth as it is in Jesus, and their faith no longer "stands in the wisdom of man but in the power of God." Some of the most *rude* and disorderly, are become regular in their behaviour, and sober in all things. The *gay* and airy are become grave and serious.

Some of the *greatest sinners* have appeared to be turned into real saints: Drunkards have become temperate: Fornicators and adulterers of a chaste conversation; Swearers and profane persons have learned to fear that glorious and fearful Name, THE LORD THEIR GOD; and carnal worldlings have been made to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Yea, deriders and scoffers at this work and its instruments, have come under its conquering power. Some of this stamp, who have gone to hear the preacher, (as some did Paul—"What will this babbler say?")—have not been able to resist the power and the Spirit with which he spake; have sat trembling under the word, and gone away from it weeping; and afterward did cleave unto the preacher, as Dionysius the Areopagite did unto Paul †. Divers instances of this kind have fallen under my knowledge.

* 1 Cor. xv.

† Acts xvii. 18, 34.

The *virtuous* and civil have been convinced that Morality is not to be relied on for life; and so excited to seek after the new birth, and a vital union to Jesus Christ by faith. The *formal* professor likewise has been awakened out of his dead formalities, brought under the power of godliness; taken off from his false rests, and brought to build his hope only on the Mediator's righteousness. At the same time, many of the *children of God* have been greatly quickened and refreshed; have been awakened out of the sleeping frames they were fallen into, and excited to give diligence to make their calling and election sure; and have had precious, reviving, and sealing times.—Thus, extensive and general the divine influence has been at this glorious season.

One thing more is worthy of remark; and this is the *uniformity* of the work. By the accounts I have received in letters, and conversation with ministers and others, who live in different parts of the land where this work is going on, it is the same work that is carried on in one place and another: The method of the Spirit's operation on the minds of the people is the same; though with some variety of circumstances, as is usual at other times: And the particular appearances with which this work is attended, that have not been so common at other times, are also much the same. These are indeed objected by many against the work: But though conversion is the same work, in the main strokes of it, wherever it is wrought; yet it seems reasonable to suppose that at an extraordinary season wherein God is pleased to carry on a work of his grace in a more observable and glorious manner, in a way which he would have to be taken notice of by the world; at such a time, I say, it seems reasonable to suppose, that there may be some particular appearances in the work of conversion, which are not common at other times—when yet there are true conversions wrought—or some circumstances attending the work may be carried to an unusual degree and height. If it were not thus, the work of the Lord would not be so much regarded and spoken of; and so God would not have so much of the glory of it. Nor would the work itself be like to spread so fast; for God has evidently made use of example and discourse in the carrying of it on.

And as to the *fruits* of this work, (which we have been bid so often to wait for) blessed be God! so far as there has been time for observation, they appear to be abiding. I do not mean that none have lost their impressions, or that there are no instances of hypocrisy and apostacy. Scripture and experience lead us to expect these, at such a season. It is to me matter of surprise and thankfulness that as yet there have been no more. But I mean, that a great number of those who have been awakened are still seeking and striving to enter in at the straight gate. The most of those who have been thought to be converted, continue to give evidence of their being new creatures, and seem to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart. To be sure, a new face of things continues in this town: though many circumstances concur to render such a work not so observable here,* as in smaller and distant places. Many things not becoming the profession of the Gospel are in a measure reformed. Taverns, Dancing-

*i. e. Boston, in New England.

schools, and such meetings as have been called assemblies, which have always proved unfriendly to serious godliness are much less frequented. Many have reduced their dress and apparel, so as to make them look more like the followers of the humble Jesus. And it has been both surprising and pleasant to see how some younger people, and of that sex too which is most fond of such vanities, have put off the "bravery of their ornaments," as the effect and indication of their seeking the inward glories of "the King's Daughter." Religion is now much more the subject of conversation at friends' houses, than ever I knew it. The doctrines of grace are espoused and relished. Private religious meetings are greatly multiplied.—The public assemblies (especially lectures) are much better attended: And our auditors were never so attentive and serious. There is indeed an extraordinary appetite after "the sincere milk of the word."

It is more than a twelve-month since an evening lecture was set up in this town; there are now several; two constantly on Tuesday and Friday evenings; when some of our most capacious houses are well filled with hearers, who by their looks and deportment seem to come to hear that their souls might live. An evening in God's courts is now esteemed better than many elsewhere. There is also great resort to ministers in private. Our hands continue full of work: and many times we have more than we can discourse with distinctly and separately.—I have been thus large and particular, that persons at a distance, who are desirous to know the present state of religion here, into whose hands these papers will come, may receive some satisfaction.

And now, can any be at a loss to *what spirit* to ascribe this work? To attribute it as some do, to the Devil, is to make the old serpent, like the foolish woman, "who plucked down her house with her hands.*" Our Saviour has taught us to argue otherwise in such a case as this. "Every kingdom divided against itself, shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: How then shall his kingdom stand?"

That some entertain *prejudices* against this work, and others revile and reproach it, does not make it look less like a work of God: It would else want one mark of its being so; for the spirit of this world, and the spirit which is of God, are contrary the one to the other. I do not wonder that Satan rages, and shews his rage in some that are under his influence, when his kingdom is so shaken, and his subjects desert him by hundreds, I hope by thousands.—The prejudices of some, I make no doubt, are owing to the want of opportunity to be rightly informed, and their having received misrepresentations from abroad. Others may be offended, because they have not experienced any thing like such a work in themselves; and if these things be so, they must begin again, and get another foundation laid than that on which they have built; and this is what men are hardly brought to. And others, perhaps, may dislike the present work, because it supports and confirms some principles which they have not yet embraced, and against which such prejudices hang about their minds, as they cannot easily shake off. For it is certain, these fruits do not grow on Arminian ground. I hope none dislike the work, because they have not been used as instruments in it. For if we love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, we shall rejoice to see him increase, though we should decrease. If any are

* Prov. xiv. 4. || Matth. xii. 25, 26.

resolutely set to disbelieve this work, to reproach and oppose it, they must be left to the free sovereign power and mercy of God to enlighten and rescue them. These, if they have had opportunity to be rightly informed, I am ready to think, would have been disbelievers, and opposers of the miracles and mission of our Saviour, had they lived in his days. The malignity which some of them have discovered, to me approaches near to the unpardonable sin; and they had need beware, lest they indeed sin the sin which is unto death: For as I believe it can be committed in these days, as well as in the days of the apostles, so I think persons are now in more danger of committing it than at other times. At least, let them come under the awe of that word, Psal. xxviii. 5. "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up."

But if any are disposed to receive conviction, have a mind open to light, and are really willing to know of the present work whether it be of God, it is with great satisfaction and pleasure I can recommend to them the following sheets; in which they will find the "distinguishing marks" of such a work, as they are to be found in the Holy Scriptures, applied to the uncommon operation that has been on the minds of many in this land. Here the matter is tried by the infallible touchstone of the holy Scriptures, and is weighed in the balance of the Sanctuary, with great judgment and impartiality.

A performance of this kind is seasonable and necessary; and I desire heartily to bless God, who inclined this his servant to undertake it, and has graciously assisted him in it. The Reverend Author is known to be "a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven;" the place where he has been called to exercise his ministry has been famous for experimental religion; and he has had opportunities to observe this work in many places where it has powerfully appeared, and to converse with numbers that have been the subjects of it. These things qualify him for this undertaking above most. His arguments in favour of the work, are strongly drawn from Scripture, Reason and Experience: And I shall believe every candid, judicious reader will say, he writes very free from an enthusiastic, or a party spirit. The use of human learning is asserted; a methodical way of preaching, the fruit of study as well as prayer, is recommended; and the exercise of charity in judging others pressed and urged: And those things which are esteemed the blemishes, and are like to be the hinderances of the work, are with great faithfulness cautioned and warned against.—Many, I believe, will be thankful for this publication. Those who have already entertained favourable thoughts of this work, will be confirmed by it; and the doubting may be convinced and satisfied. But if there are any who cannot after all see the signatures of a divine hand on the work, it is to be hoped they will be prevailed on to spare their censures, and stop their oppositions, lest "haply they should be found even to fight against God."

I had yet several things to say, which I see I must suppress, or I shall go much beyond the limits of a preface: And I fear I need to ask pardon both of the reader and the publishers for the length I have run already. Only I cannot help expressing my wish, that those who have been conversant in this work, in one place and another, would transmit accounts of it to such a hand as the Reverend Author of this discourse, to be compiled into a narrative, like that of the conversions at Northampton, which was published a few years ago; that so the world may know this surprising dis-

pensation, in the beginning, progress, and various circumstances of it. This, I apprehend, would be for the honour of the Holy Spirit, whose work and office has been treated so reproachfully in the christian world. It would be an open attestation to the divinity of a despised Gospel: And it might have a happy effect on other places, where the sound of this marvellous work would by this means be heard. I cannot but think it would be one of the most useful pieces of Church History the people of God are blessed with. Perhaps it would come the nearest to the Acts of the Apostles of any thing extant; and all the histories in the world do not come up to that: There we have something as surprising as in the book of Genesis: And a new creation, of another kind, seems to open to our view. But I must forbear.

I will only add my prayer, That the worthy Author of this discourse, may long be continued a burning and shining light in the golden candlestick where Christ has placed him, and from thence diffuse his light through these Provinces! That the divine Spirit, whose cause is here espoused, would accompany this and the other valuable publications of his servant, with his powerful influences; that they may promote the Redeemer's interest, serve the ends of vital religion, and so add to the Author's present joy, and future crown!

W. COOPER,

Boston, Nov. 20, 1741.

THE
MARKS OF A WORK
OF THE
TRUE SPIRIT.

1 JOHN IV. 1.

Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

IN The apostolic age, there was the greatest out-pouring of the spirit of God that ever was; both as to his extraordinary influences and gifts, and his ordinary operations, in convincing, converting, enlightening and sanctifying the souls of men. But as the influences of the true spirit abounded, so counterfeits did also abound: The Devil was abundant in mimicking, both the ordinary and extraordinary influences of the spirit of God, as is manifest by innumerable passages of the apostles' writings. This made it very necessary that the church of Christ should be furnished with some certain rules, distinguishing and clear marks, by which she might proceed safely in judging of the true from the false, without danger of being imposed upon. The giving of such rules is the plain design of this chapter, where we have this matter more expressly and fully treated of than any where else in the Bible. The apostle, of set purpose undertakes to supply the church of God with such marks of the true spirit as may be plain and safe, and well accommodated to use and practice; and that the subject might be clearly and sufficiently handled, he insists upon it throughout the chapter which makes it wonderful that what is here said is no more taken notice of in this extraordinary day, when there is such an uncommon and extensive operation on the minds of peo-

ple, such a variety of opinions concerning it, and so much talk about the work of the Spirit.

The apostle's discourse on this subject is introduced by an occasional mention of the indwelling of the spirit, as the sure evidence of an interest in Christ. "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us." Whence we may infer, that the design of the apostle is not only to give marks whereby to distinguish the true spirit from the false, in his extraordinary gifts of prophecy and and miracles, but also in his ordinary influences on the minds of his people, in order to their union to Christ, and being built up in him; which is also manifest from the marks themselves that are given, which we shall hereafter notice.

The words of the text are an introduction to this discourse of the distinguishing signs of the true and false spirit.—Before the apostle proceeds to lay down these signs, he exhorteth christians, first, against an over credulousness, and a forwardness to admit every specious appearance as the work of a true spirit. "Beloved believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." and, second, he shews, that there were many counterfeits, "because many false prophets were gone out into the world." These did not only pretend to have the spirit of God in his extraordinary gifts of inspiration, but also to be the great friends and favourites of heaven, to be eminently holy persons, and to have much of the ordinary saving, sanctifying influences of the spirit of God on their hearts. Hence we are to look upon these words as a direction to examine and try their pretences to the spirit of God, in both these respects.

My design therefore at this time is to show what are the true, certain and distinguishing evidences of a work of the spirit of God, by which we may safely proceed in judging of any operation we find in ourselves, or see in others. And here I would observe, that we are to take the *scriptures* as our guide in such cases. This is the great and standing rule which God has given to his church, in order to guide them in things relating to the great concerns of their souls; and it is an infallible and sufficient rule. There are undoubtedly sufficient marks given to guide the church of God in this great affair of judging of spirits, without which it would lie open to woful delusion, and would be remedilessly exposed to be imposed on and devoured by its enemies. And we need not be afraid to trust these rules. Doubtless that spirit

who indited the scriptures knew how to give us good rules, by which to distinguish his operations from all that is falsely pretended to be from him. And this as I observed before, the spirit of God has here done of set purpose, and done it more particularly and fully than any where else : so that in my present discourse I shall go no where else for rules or marks for the trial of spirits, but shall confine myself to those that I find in this chapter.—But before I proceed particularly to speak to these, I would prepare my way by, *FIRST*, observing *negatively*, in some instances, what are *not signs* or evidences of a work of the spirit of God.

SECT. I.

NEGATIVE SIGNS; or, What are no signs by which we are to judge of a work—and especially, What are no evidences that a work is not from the spirit of God.

I. Nothing can be certainly concluded from this, That a work is carried on in a way very unusual and extraordinary; provided the variety or difference be such, as may still be comprehended within the limits of scripture rules. What the church has been used to, is not a rule by which we are to judge; because there may be new and extraordinary works of God, and he has heretofore evidently wrought in an extraordinary manner. He has brought to pass new things, strange works; and has wrought in such a manner as to surprise both men and angels. And as God has done thus in times past, so we have no reason to think but that he will do so still. The prophecies of scripture give us reason to think that God has things to accomplish, which have never yet been seen. No deviation from what has hitherto been usual, let it be never so great, is an argument that a work is not from the spirit of God, if it be no deviation from his prescribed rule. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in his operation; and we know that he uses a great variety; and we cannot tell how great a variety he may use, within the compass of the rules he himself has fixed. We ought not to limit God where he has not limited himself.

Therefore it is not reasonable to determine that a work is not from God's holy spirit because of the extraordinary degree in which the minds of persons are influenced. If they seem to have an extraordinary conviction of the dreadful nature of sin,

and a very uncommon sense of the misery of a Christless condition—or extraordinary views of the certainty and glory of divine things,—and are proportionably moved with very extraordinary affections of fear and sorrow, desire, love or joy: or if the apparent change be very sudden, and the work be carried on with very unusual swiftness—and the persons affected are very numerous, and many of them are very young, with other unusual circumstances, not infringing upon scripture marks of a work of the spirit—these things are no argument that the work is not of the spirit of God.—The extraordinary and unusual degree of influence, and power of operation, if in its nature it be agreeable to the rules and marks given in scripture, is rather an argument in its favour; for by how much higher the degree which in its nature is agreeable to the rule, so much the more is there of conformity to the rule; and so much the more evident that conformity. When things are in small degrees, though they be really agreeable to the rule, it is not so easily seen whether their nature agrees with the rule.

There is a great aptness in persons to doubt of things that are strange; especially elderly persons, to think that to be right which they have never been used to in their day and have not heard of in the days of their fathers. But if it be a good argument that a work is not from the spirit of God, that it is very unusual, then it was so in the apostles' days. The work of the spirit then, was carried on in a manner that, in very many respects, was altogether new; such as never had been seen nor heard since the world stood. The work was then carried on with more visible and remarkable power than ever; nor had there been seen before such mighty and wonderful effects of the spirit of God in sudden changes, and such great engagedness and zeal in great multitudes—such a sudden alteration in towns, cities, and countries; such a swift progress, and vast extent of the work—and many other extraordinary circumstances might be mentioned. The great unusualness of the work surprised the Jews; they knew not what to make of it, but could not believe it to be the work of God; many looked upon the persons that were the subjects of it as bereft of reason; as you may see in Acts ii. 13, 26, 24. and 1 Cor. iv. 10.

And we have reason from scripture prophecy to suppose, that at the commencement of that last and greatest out-pouring of the spirit of God, that is to be in the latter ages of the world, the manner of the work will be very extraordinary, and such as never has yet been seen; so that there

shall be occasion then to say as in Isa. lxvi. 8. "Who hath heard such a thing ? Who hath seen such things ? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day ? Shall a nation be born at once ? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." It may be reasonably expected that the extraordinary manner of the work then, will bear some proportion to the very extraordinary events, and that glorious change in the state of the world which God will bring to pass by it.

II. A work is not to be judged of by any effects on the bodies of men ; such as tears, trembling, groans, loud outcries, agonies of body, or the failing of bodily strength. The influence persons are under, is not to be judged of one way or other, by such effects on the body ; and the reason is, because the scripture nowhere gives us any such rule. We cannot conclude that persons are under the influence of the true spirit because we see such effects upon their bodies, because this is not given as a mark of the true spirit ; nor on the other hand, have we any reason to conclude, from any such outward appearances, that persons are not under the influence of the spirit of God, because there is no rule of scripture given us to judge of spirits by, that does either expressly or indirectly exclude such effects on the body, nor does reason exclude them. It is easily accounted for from the consideration of the nature of divine and eternal things, and the nature of man, and the laws of the union between soul and body, how a right influence, a true and proper sense of things, should have such effects on the body, even those that are of the most extraordinary kind, such as taking away the bodily strength, or throwing the body into great agonies, and extorting loud outcries. There are none of us but do suppose, and would have been ready at any time to say it, that the misery of hell is doubtless so dreadful, and eternity so vast, that if a person should have a clear apprehension of that misery as it is, it would be more than his feeble frame could bear, and especially if at the same time he saw himself in great danger of it, and to be utterly uncertain whether he should be delivered from it, yea, and to have no security from it one day or hour. If we consider human nature, we must not wonder, that when persons have a great sense of that which is so amazingly dreadful, and also have a great view of their own wickedness and God's anger, that things seem to them to for-

bode speedy and immediate destruction. We see the nature of man to be such that when he is in danger of some terrible calamity to which he is greatly exposed, he is ready upon every occasion to think, that *now* it is coming.—When persons' hearts are full of fear, in time of war, they are ready to tremble at the shaking of a leaf, and to expect the enemy every minute, and to say within themselves, *now* I shall be slain. If we should suppose that a person saw himself hanging over a great pit, full of fierce and glowing flames, by a thread that he knew to be very weak, and not sufficient to bear his weight, and knew that multitudes had been in such circumstances before, and that most of them had fallen and perished, and saw nothing within reach, that he could take hold of to save him, what distress would he be in? How ready to think that *now* the thread was breaking, that *now this minute*, he should be swallowed up in those dreadful flames? And would not he be ready to cry out in such circumstances? How much more those that see themselves in this manner hanging over an infinitely more dreadful pit, or held over it in the hand of God, who at the same time they see to be exceedingly provoked? No wonder that the wrath of God, when manifested but a little to the soul, overhears human strength.

So it may easily be accounted for, that a true sense of the glorious excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his wonderful dying love, and the exercise of a truly spiritual love and joy, should be such as very much to overcome the bodily strength. We are all ready to own, that no man can see God and live, and that it is but a very small part of that apprehension of the glory and love of Christ, which the saints enjoy in heaven, that our present frame can bear; therefore it is not at all strange that God should sometimes give his saints such foretastes of heaven, as to diminish their bodily strength. If it was not unaccountable that the queen of Sheba fainted, and had her bodily strength taken away, when she came to see the glory of Solomon, much less is it unaccountable that she who is the antitype of the queen of Sheba (*viz.*) the Church, that is brought as it were, from the utmost ends of the earth, from being an alien and stranger, far off, in a state of sin and misery, should faint when she comes to see the glory of Christ, who is the antitype of Solomon; and especially will be so in that prosperous, peaceful, glorious kingdom, which he will set up in the world in its latter age.

Some object against such extraordinary appearances, that we have no instances of them recorded in the New Testament, under the extraordinary effusions of the Spirit. Were this allowed, I can see no force in the objection, if neither reason, nor any rule of Scripture exclude such things; especially considering what was observed under the foregoing particular. I do not know that we have any express mention in the New Testament of any person's weeping, or groaning, or sighing through fear of hell, or a sense of God's anger; but is there any body so foolish as from hence to argue, that in whomsoever these things appear, their convictions are not from the spirit of God? And the reason why we do not argue thus, is, because these are easily accounted for, from what we know of the nature of man, and from what the Scriptures inform us in general, concerning the nature of eternal things, and the nature of the convictions of God's spirit; so that there is no need that any thing should be said in particular concerning these external, circumstantial effects. No body supposes that there is any need of express scripture for every external, accidental manifestation of the inward motion of the mind: And though such circumstances are not particularly recorded in sacred history, yet there is a great deal of reason to think, from the general accounts we have, that it could not be otherwise than that such things must be in those days. And there is also reason to think, that such great outpouring of the spirit, was not wholly without those more extraordinary effects on persons' bodies. The jailor in particular, seems to have been an instance of that nature, when he, in the utmost distress and amazement, came trembling, and fell down before Peter and Silas. His falling down at that time does not seem to be a designed putting himself into a posture of supplication, or humble address to Paul and Silas; for he seems not to have said any thing to them then; but he first brought them out, and then he says to them, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Acts xvi. 29 and 30. But his falling down seems to be from the same cause as his trembling. The Psalmist gives an account of his crying out aloud, and a great weakning of his body under convictions of conscience, and a sense of the guilt of sin, Psa. xxxii. 3, 4. "When I kept silence my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long, for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer."—We may at least argue so much from it, that such an effect of conviction of sin, may well in some cases be supposed; for if we should suppose any

thing of an *auresis* in the expressions, yet the Psalmist would not represent his case by what would be absurd, and to which no degree of that exercise of mind he spoke of, would have any tendency.—We read of the disciples, Matt. xiv. 26. that when they saw Christ coming to them in the storm, and took him for some terrible enemy, threatening their destruction in that storm, “they cried out for fear:” Why then should it be thought strange, that persons should cry out for fear, when God appears to them, as a terrible enemy, and they see themselves in great danger of being swallowed up in the bottomless gulph of eternal misery? The spouse, once and again, speaks of herself as overpowered with the love of Christ, so as to weaken her body, and make her faint. Cant. ii. 5. “Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.” and chap. v. 8. “I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love.” From whence we may at least argue, that such an effect may well be supposed to arise, from such a cause in the saints in some cases, and that such an effect will sometimes be seen in the Church of Christ.

It is a weak objection, that the impressions of enthusiasts have a great effect on their bodies. That the Quakers used to tremble, is no argument that Saul, afterwards Paul, and the jailor, did not tremble from real convictions of conscience. Indeed all such objections from effects on the body, let them be greater or less, seem to be exceeding frivolous; they who argue thence, proceed in the dark, they know not what ground they go upon, nor by what rule they judge. The root and course of things is to be looked at, and the nature of the operations and affections are to be inquired into, and examined by the rule of God’s word, and not the motions of the blood and animal spirits.

III. It is no argument that an operation on the minds of people, is not the work of the spirit of God, that it occasions a great deal of noise about religion. For though true religion be of a contrary nature to that of the Pharisees—which was ostentations, and delighted to set itself forth to the view of men for their applause—yet such is human nature, that it is morally impossible there should be a great concern, strong affection, and a general engagedness of mind amongst a people, without causing a notable, visible, and open commotion and alteration amongst that people.—Surely, it is no argument that the minds of persons are not under the influence of God’s spirit, that they are very much moved: for indeed

spiritual and eternal things are so great, and of such infinite concern, that there is a great absurdity in men's being but moderately moved and affected by them ; and surely it is no argument that they are not moved by the spirit of God, that they are affected with these things in some measure as they deserve, or in some proportion to their importance. And when was there ever any such thing since the world stood, as a people in general being greatly affected in any affair whatsoever, without noise or stir? The nature of man will not allow it.

Indeed Christ says, Luke xvii. 20. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." That is, it will not consist in what is outward and visible ; it shall not be like earthly kingdoms, set up with outward pomp, in some particular place; which shall be especially the royal city, and seat of the kingdom ; as Christ explains himself on the words next following, "Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there ; for Behold the kingdom of God is within you." Not that the kingdom of God shall be set up in the world, on the ruins of Satan's kingdom, without a very observable, great effect : a mighty change in the state of things, to the observation and astonishment of the whole world : For such an effect as this is even held forth in the prophecies of Scripture, and is so by Christ himself, in this very place, and even in his own explanation of these forementioned words, ver. 24. "For as the lightning that lightneth out of one part under heaven, shineth unto another part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be in his day." This is to distinguish Christ's coming to set up his kingdom, from the coming of false Christs, which he tells us will be in a private manner in the deserts, and in the secret chambers ; whereas this event of setting up the kingdom of God, should be open and public, in the sight of the whole world with clear manifestation, like lightning that cannot be hid, but glares in every one's eyes and shines from one side of heaven to the other. And we find, that when Christ's kingdom came, by that remarkable pouring out of the Spirit in the apostle's days, it occasioned a great stir every where. What a mighty opposition was there in Jerusalem, on occasion of that great effusion of the Spirit? And so in Samaria, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth and other places? The affair filled the world with noise, and gave occasion to some to say of the apostles, that they had turned the world upside down. Acts xvii. 6.

IV. It is no argument that an operation on the minds of a people, is not the work of the Spirit of God, that many who are the subjects of it, have great impressions made on their im-

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aginations. That persons have many impressions on their imaginations, does not prove that they have nothing else. It is easy to be accounted for, that there should be much of this nature amongst a people, where a great multitude of all kinds of constitutions, have their minds engaged with intense thought and strong affections about invisible things; yea, it would be strange if there should not. Such is our nature, that we cannot think of things invisible, without a degree of imagination. I dare appeal to any man, of the greatest powers of mind, whether he is able to fix his thoughts on God, or Christ, or the things of another world, without imaginary ideas attending his meditations? And the more engaged the mind is, and the more intense the contemplation and affection, still the more lively and strong the imaginary idea will ordinarily be; especially when attended with surprise. And this is the case when the mental prospect is very new, and takes strong hold of the passions, as fear or joy! and when the change of the state and views of the mind is sudden, from a contrary extreme, as from that which was extremely dreadful, to that which is extremely ravishing and delightful. And it is no wonder that many persons do not well distinguish between that which is imaginary and that which is intellectual and spiritual; and that they are apt to lay too much weight on the imaginary part, and are most ready to speak of that in the account they give of their experiences, especially persons of less understanding and of distinguishing capacity.

As God has given us such a faculty as the imagination, and so made us that we cannot think of things spiritual and invisible, without some exercise of this faculty; so, it appears to me, that such is our state and nature, that this faculty is really subservient and helpful to the other faculties of the mind, when a proper use is made of it; though oftentimes, when the imagination is too strong, and the other faculties weak, it overbears, and disturbs them in their exercise. It appears to me manifest, in many instances with which I have been acquainted, that God has really made use of this faculty to truly divine purposes; especially in some that are more ignorant. God seems to condescend to their circumstances, and deal with them as babes; as of old he instructed his Church, whilst in a state of ignorance and minority, by types and outward representations. I can see nothing unreasonable in such a supposition. Let others who have much occasion to deal with souls in spiritual concerns, judge whether experience does not confirm it.

It is no argument that a work is not of the Spirit of God, that some who are the subjects of it have been in a kind of extacy, wherein they have been carried beyond themselves, and have had their minds transported into a train of strong and pleasing imaginations, and a kind of visions, as though they were wrapt up even to heaven, and there saw glorious sights. I have been acquainted with some such instances, and I see no need of bringing in the help of the devil into the account that we give of these things, nor yet of supposing them to be of the same nature with the visions of the prophets, or St. Paul's rapture into paradise. Human nature, under these intense exercises and affections, is all that need be brought into the account. If it may be well accounted for, that persons under a true sense of the glorious and wonderful greatness and excellency of divine things, and soul-ravishing views of the beauty and love of Christ, should have the strength of nature overpowered, as I have already shewn that it may; then I think it is not at all strange, that amongst great numbers that are thus affected and overborn, there should be some persons of particular constitutions that should have their imaginations thus affected. The effect is no other than what bears a proportion and analogy to other effects of the strong exercise of their minds. It is no wonder, when the thoughts are so fixed, and the affections so strong—and the whole soul so engaged, ravished, and swallowed up—that all other parts of the body are so affected, as to be deprived of their strength, and the whole frame ready to dissolve. Is it any wonder that, in such a case, the brain in particular (especially in some constitutions) which we know is most especially affected by intense contemplations and exercises of mind, should be so affected, that its strength and spirits should for a season be diverted, and taken off from impressions made on the organs of external sense, and be wholly employed in a train of pleasing delightful imaginations, corresponding with the present frame of the mind. Some are ready to interpret such things wrong, and to lay too much weight on them, as prophetic visions, divine revelations, and sometimes significations from heaven of what shall come to pass; which the issue, in some instances I have known has shewn to be otherwise. But yet, it appears to me that such things are evidently sometimes from the Spirit of God, though indirectly; that is, their extraordinary frame of mind, and that strong and lively sense of divine things which is the occasion of them, is from his Spirit; and also as the mind continues in its holy frame, and retains a

divine sense of the excellency of spiritual things even in its rapture; which holy frame and sense is from the Spirit of God, though the imaginations that attend it are but accidental, and therefore there is commonly something or other in them that is confused, improper and false.

V. It is no sign that a work is not from the Spirit of God, that example is a great means of it. It is surely no argument that an effect is not from God, that means are used in producing it; for we know that it is God's manner to make use of means in carrying on his work in the world, and it is no more an argument against the divinity of an effect, that this means is made use of, than if it was by any other means. It is agreeable to Scripture that persons should be influenced by one another's good example. The Scripture directs us to set good examples to that end, Matt. v. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 1. 1 Tim. iv. 12. Titus ii. 7. and also directs us to be influenced by the good examples of others, and to follow them, 2 Cor. viii. 1—7. Heb. vi. 12. Phil. iii. 17. 1 Cor. iv. 16. and chap. xi. 1. 2 Thes. iii. 9. 1 Thes. i. 7. By which it appears, that example is one of God's means; and certainly it is no argument that a work is not of God, that his own means are made use of to effect it.

And as it is a *scriptural* way of carrying on God's work, by example, so it is a *reasonable* way. It is no argument that men are not influenced by reason, that they are influenced by example. This way of persons holding forth truth to one another, has a tendency to enlighten the mind, and to convince reason. None will deny but that for persons to signify things one to another by words, may rationally be supposed to tend to enlighten each others minds; but the same thing may be signified by actions, and signified much more fully and effectually. Words are of no use any otherwise than as they convey our own ideas to others; but actions, in some cases, may do it much more fully. There is a language in actions; and in some cases, much more clear and convincing than in words. It is therefore no argument against the goodness of the effect, that persons are greatly affected by seeing others so; yea, though the impression be made only by seeing the tokens of great and extraordinary affection in others in their behaviour, taking for granted what they are affected with, without hearing them say one word. There may be language sufficient in such a case in their behaviour only, to convey their minds to others, and to signify to them their sense of things more than can possibly be done by words only. If a

person should see another under extreme bodily torment, he might receive much clearer ideas, and more convincing evidence of what he suffered by his actions in his misery, than he could do only by the words of an unaffected indifferent relator. In like manner he might receive a greater idea of any thing that is excellent and very delightful, from the behaviour of one that is in actual enjoyment, than by the dull narration of one which is inexperienced and insensible himself. I desire that this matter may be examined by the strictest reason.—Is it not manifest, that effects produced in persons' minds are rational, since not only weak and ignorant people are much influenced by example, but also those that make the greatest boast of strength of reason; are more influenced by reason held forth in this way, than almost any other way. Indeed the religious affections of many when raised by this means, as by hearing the word preached, or any other means, may prove flashy, and soon vanish, as Christ represents the stony ground hearers; but the affections of some thus moved by example, are abiding, and prove to be of saving issue.

There never yet was a time of remarkable pouring out of the Spirit, and great revival of religion, but that example had a main hand. So it was at the reformation, and in the apostles' days, in Jerusalem and Samaria, and Ephesus, and other parts of the world, as will be most manifest to any one that attends to the accounts we have in the Acts of the Apostles. As in those days one person was moved by another, so one city or town was influenced by the example of another, 1 Thes. i. 7. 8. "So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia, for from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.

It is no valid objection against examples being so much used, that the Scripture speaks of the word as the principle means of carrying on God's work; for the word of God is the principle means, nevertheless, by which other means operate and are made effectual. Even the Sacraments have no effect but by the word; and so it is that example becomes effectual; for all that is visible to the eye is unintelligible and vain, without the word of God to instruct and guide the mind. It is the word of God that is indeed held forth and applied by example, as the word of the Lord sounded forth to other towns in Macedonia, and Achaia, by the example of those that believe in Thessalonica.

That example should be a great means of propagating the church of God seems to be several ways signified in scripture: It is signified by Ruth's following Naomi out of the land of Moab, into the land of Israel, when she resolved that she would not leave her, but would go whither she went, and would lodge where she lodged; and that Naomi's people should be her people, and Naomi's God, her God. Ruth, who was the ancestral mother of David, and of Christ, was undoubtedly a great type of the Church; upon which account her history is inserted in the canon of Scripture. In her leaving the land of Moab and its gods, to come and put her trust under the shadow of the wings of the God of Israel, we have a type of the conversion not only of the Gentile church but of every sinner, that is naturally an alien and stranger, but in his conversion forgets his own people, and father's house, and becomes a fellow-citizen with the saints and a true Israelite. The same seems to be signified in the effect the example of the spouse, when she was sick of love, has on the daughters of Jerusalem, i. e. visible Christians, who are first awakened, by seeing the spouse in such extraordinary circumstances, and then converted. See Cant. v. 8, 9. and vi. 1. And this is undoubtedly one way that "the Spirit and the Bride say, come." Rev. xxii. 17. i. e. the spirit in the bride. It is foretold, that the work of God should be very much carried on by this means, in the last great out pouring of the Spirit, that should introduce the glorious day of the Church, so often spoken of in Scripture, Zech. viii. 21—23. "And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts; I will go also. Yea many people, and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

VI. It is no sign that a work is not from the Spirit of God, that many, who seem to be the subjects of it, are guilty of great imprudences and irregularities in their conduct. We are to consider that the end for which God pours out his Spirit, is to make men holy, and not to make them politicians. It is no wonder that, in a mixt multitude of all sorts—wise and unwise, young and old, of weak and strong natural abilities, under strong impressions of mind—there are many who be-

have themselves imprudently. There are but few that know how to conduct them under vehement affections of any kind, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature; to do so requires a great deal of discretion, strength and steadiness of mind. A thousand imprudences will not prove a work to be not of the Spirit of God; yea, if there be not only imprudences, but many things prevailing that are irregular, and really contrary to the rules of God's holy word. That it should be thus may be well accounted for from the exceeding weakness of human nature, together with the remaining darkness and corruption of those that are yet the subjects of the saving influences of God's Spirit, and have a real zeal for God.

We have a remarkable instance, in the New Testament, of a people that partook largely of that great effusion of the Spirit in the Apostles' days, among whom there nevertheless abounded imprudences and great irregularities; viz. the church at Corinth. There is scarce any church more celebrated in the New Testament for being blessed with large measures of the Spirit of God, both in his ordinary influences, in convincing and converting sinners, and also in his extraordinary and miraculous gifts; yet what manifold imprudences, great and sinful irregularities, and strange confusion did they run into, at the Lord's Supper, and in the exercise of Church Discipline? To which may be added, their indecent manner of attending other parts of public worship, their jarring and contention about their teachers, and even the exercise of their extraordinary gifts of prophecy, speaking with tongues, and the like, wherein they spake and acted by the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God.

And if we see great imprudences, and even sinful irregularities, in some who are great instruments to carry on the work, it will not prove it not to be the work of God. The Apostle Peter himself, who was a great, eminently holy, and inspired apostle—and one of the chief instruments of setting up the Christian Church in the world—when he was actually engaged in this work, was guilty of a great and sinful error in his conduct; of which the Apostle Paul speaks, Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed; for before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles, but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision; and the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch, that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation." If a great

pillar of the Christian church—one of the chief of those who are the very foundations on which, next to Christ, the whole church is said to be built—was guilty of such an irregularity; is it any wonder if other lesser instruments, who have not that extraordinary conduct of the divine Spirit he had, should be guilty of many irregularities?

And in particular, it is no evidence that a work is not of God, if many who are either the subjects or the instruments of it, are guilty of too great forwardness to censure others as unconverted. For this may be through mistakes they have embraced concerning the marks by which they are to judge of the hypocrisy and carnality of others; or from not duly apprehending the latitude the Spirit of God uses in the methods of his operations; or, from want of making due allowance for that infirmity and corruption that may be left in the hearts of the saints; as well as through want of a due sense of their own blindness and weakness, and remaining corruption, whereby spiritual pride may have a secret vent this way, under some disguise, and not be discovered.—If we allow that truly pious men may have a great deal of remaining blindness and corruption, and may be liable to mistakes about the marks of hypocrisy, as undoubtedly all will allow, then it is not unaccountable that they should sometimes run into such errors as these. It is as easy, and upon some accounts more easy to be accounted for, why the remaining corruption of good men should sometimes have an unobserved vent this way, than most other ways; and without doubt (however lamentable) many holy men have erred in this way.

Lukewarmness in religion is abominable, and zeal an excellent grace; yet above all other Christian virtues, this needs to be strictly watched and searched; for it is that with which corruption, and particularly pride and human passion, is exceedingly apt to mix unobserved. And it is observable, that that there never was a time of great reformation, to cause a revival of zeal in the church of God, but that it has been attended, in some notable instances, with irregularity, and a running out some way or other into an undue severity. Thus in the apostles' days, a great deal of zeal was spent about unclean meats, with heat of spirit in Christians one against another, both parties condemning and censuring one another, as not true christians; when the apostle had charity for both, as influenced by a spirit of real piety: "He that eats," says he, "to the Lord he eats, and giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." So

in the church of Corinth, they had got into a way of extolling some ministers, and censuring others, and were puffed up one against another : but yet these things were no sign that the work then so wonderfully carried on, was not the work of God. And after this, when religion was still greatly flourishing in the world, and a spirit of eminent holiness and zeal prevailed in the Christian church, the zeal of christians ran out into a very improper and undue severity, in the exercise of church discipline towards delinquents. In some cases they would by no means admit them into their charity and communion though they appeared never so humble and penitent. And in the days of Constantine the Great, the zeal of Christians against heathenism run out into a degree of persecution. So in that glorious revival of religion, at the reformation, zeal in many instances appeared in a very improper severity, and even a degree of persecution ; yea in some of the most eminent reformers ; as in the great Calvin in particular. And many in those days of the flourishing of vital religion, were guilty of severely censuring others that differed from them in opinion in some points of divinity.

VII. Nor are many errors in judgment, and some delusions of Satan intermixed with the work, any argument that the work in general is not of the spirit of God. However great a spiritual influence may be, it is not to be expected that the spirit of God should be given now in the same manner as to the apostles, infallibly to guide them in points of Christian doctrine, so that what they taught might be relied on as a rule to the Christian church. And if many delusions of Satan appear, at the same time that a great religious concern prevails, it is not an argument that the work in general is not the work of God, any more than it was an argument in Egypt, that there were no true miracles wrought there, by the hand of God, because Jannes and Jambres wrought false miracles at the same time by the hand of the devil. Yea the same persons may be the subjects of much of the influences of the spirit of God and yet in some things be led away by the delusions of satan, and this be no more of paradox than many other things that are true of real saints, in the present state, where grace dwells with so much corruption, and the new man and the old man subsist together in the same person ; and the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil remain for a while together in the same heart. Many godly persons have undoubtedly in this and other ages, exposed themselves to woful delusions, by an apt-

ness to lay too much weight on impulses and impressions, as if they were immediate revelations from God, to signify something future, or to direct them where to go, and what to do.

VIII. If some, who were thought to be wrought upon, fall away into gross errors, or scandalous practices, it is no argument that the work in general is not the work of the spirit of God. That there are some counterfeits, is no argument that nothing is true: such things are always expected in a time of reformation. If we look into church history, we shall find no instance of any great revival of religion, but what has been attended with many such things. Instances of this nature in the apostles' days were innumerable; some fell away into gross heresies, others into vile practices, though they seemed to be the subjects of a work of the spirit—and were accepted for a while amongst those that were truly so, as their brethren and companions—and were not suspected till they went out from them. And some of these were teachers and officers—and eminent persons in the Christian church—whom God had endowed with miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; as appears by the beginning of the 6th chapter of the Hebrews. An instance of these was Judas, who was one of the twelve apostles, and had long been constantly united to, and intimately conversant with a company of truly experienced disciples, without being discovered or suspected, till he discovered himself by his scandalous practice. He had been treated by Jesus himself, in all external things, as if he had truly been a disciple, even investing him with the character of apostle, sending him forth to preach the gospel, and enduing him with miraculous gifts of the spirit. For though Christ knew him, yet he did not then cloath himself with the character of omniscient Judge, and searcher of hearts, but acted the part of a minister of the visible church, (for he was his Father's minister;) and therefore rejected him not, till he had discovered himself by his scandalous practice; thereby giving an example to guides and rulers of the visible church, not to take it upon them to act the part of searcher of hearts, but to be influenced in their administrations by what is visible and open.—There were some instances then of such apostates, as were esteemed eminently full of the grace of God's spirit. An instance of this nature probably was Nicolas, one of the seven Deacons, who was looked upon by the christians in Jerusalem, in the time of that extraordinary pouring out of the spirit, as a man full of the Holy Ghost, and was chosen out of the multitude of christians to that office, for

that reason ; as you may see in Acts vi. 3, 5. yet he afterwards fell away and became the head of a sect of vile heretics, of gross practices, called from his name the sect of the Nicolaitans,* Rev. ii. 6, and 15.

So in the time of the reformation from Popery, how great was the number of those who for a while seemed to join with the reformers, yet fell away into the grossest and most absurd errors, and abominable practices. And it is particularly observable, that in times of great pouring out of the spirit to revive religion in the world, a number of those who for a while seemed to partake in it, have fallen off into whimsical and extravagant errors, and gross enthusiasm, boasting of high degrees of spirituality and perfection, censuring and condemning others as carnal. Thus it was with the Gnosticks in the Apostles' times ; and thus it was with several sects at the reformation, as Anthony Burgess observes in his book called *Spiritual Refinings*, Part I. Sermon. 23. p. 132. "The first worthy reformers, and glorious instruments of God found a bitter conflict herein, so that they were exercised not only with formalists, and traditionary Papists on the one side, but men that pretended themselves to be more enlightened than the reformers were, on the other side: Hence they called those that did adhere to the scripture, and would try revelations by it, Literists and Vowelists, as men acquainted with the words and vowels of the Scripture, having nothing of the Spirit of God: And wheresoever in any town, the true doctrine of the gospel brake forth to the displacing of Popery, presently such opinions arose, like tares that came up among the good wheat; whereby great divisions were raised, and the reformation made abominable and odious to the world; as if that had been the Sun to give heat and warmth to those worms and serpents to crawl out of the ground. Hence they inveighed against LUTHER, and said he had only promulged a carnal gospel."—Some of the leaders of those wild enthusiasts, had been for a while highly esteemed by the first reformers, and peculiarly dear to them.—Thus also in England, at the time when vital religion much prevailed in the days of king Charles I. the interregnum, and Oliver Cromwell, such things as these abounded. And so in New England, in her purest days, when vital piety flourished, such kind of things as these broke out. Therefore the devil's sowing such tares is no proof that a true work of the Spirit of God is not gloriously carried on.

* But though these heretics assumed his name, it does not follow that he countenanced their enormities. See CALMET'S Dict. Nicolas.

IX. It is no argument that a work is not from the Spirit of God, that it seems to be promoted by ministers insisting very much on the terrors of God's holy law, and that with a great deal of pathos and earnestness. If there be really a hell of such dreadful, and never-ending torments, as is generally supposed, of which multitudes are in great danger—and into which the greater part of men in Christian countries do actually from generation to generation fall, for want of a sense of its terribleness, and so for want of taking due care to avoid it—then why is it not proper for those who have the care of souls to take great pains to make men sensible of it? Why should they not be told as much of the truth as can be? If I am in danger of going to hell, I should be glad to know as much as possibly I can of the dreadful of it. If I am very prone to neglect due care to void it, he does me the best kindness, who does most to represent to me the truth of the case, that sets forth my misery and danger in the liveliest manner.

I appeal to every one, whether this is not the very course they would take in case of exposedness to any great temporal calamity? If any of you who are heads of families saw one of your children in a house all on fire, and in imminent danger of being soon consumed in the flames, yet seemed to be very insensible of its danger, and neglected to escape after you had often called to it—would you go on to speak to it only in a cold and indifferent manner? Would not you cry aloud, and call earnestly to it, and represent the danger it was in, and its own folly in delaying, in the most lively manner of which you was capable? Would not nature itself teach this, and oblige you to it? If you should continue to speak to it only in a cold manner, as you are wont to do in ordinary conversation about indifferent matters, would not those about you begin to think you were bereft of reason yourself? This is not the way of mankind in temporal affairs of great moment, that require earnest heed and great haste, and about which they are greatly concerned. They are not wont to speak to others of their danger, and warn them but a little; or in a cold and indifferent manner. Nature teaches men otherwise. If we who have the care of souls, knew what hell was, had seen the state of the damned, or by any other means had become sensible how dreadful their case was—and at the same time knew that the greater part of men went thither and saw our hearers not sensible of their danger—it would be morally impossible for us to avoid most earnestly setting before

them the dreadfulness of that misery, and their great exposedness to it, and even to cry aloud to them.

When ministers preach of hell, and warn sinners to avoid it in a cold manner—though they may say in words that it is infinitely terrible—they contradict themselves. For actions, as I observed before, have a language as well as words. If a preacher's words represent the sinner's state as infinitely dreadful, while his behaviour and manner of speaking contradict it—shewing that the preacher does not think so—he defeats his own purpose; for the language of his actions, in such a case, is much more effectual than the bare signification of his words. Not that I think that the law only should be preached: ministers may preach other things too little. The gospel is to be preached as well as the law, and the law is to be preached only to make way for the gospel, and in order that it may be preached more effectually. The main work of ministers is to preach the gospel: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." So that a minister would miss it very much if he should insist so much on the terrors of the law, as to forget his Lord, and neglect to preach the gospel; but yet the law is very much to be insisted on, and the preaching of the gospel is like to be in vain without it.

And certainly such earnestness and affection in speaking is beautiful, as becomes the nature and importance of the subject. Not but that there may be such a thing as an indecent boisterousness in a preacher, something besides what naturally arises from the nature of his subject, and in which the matter and manner do not well agree together. Some talk of it as an unreasonable thing to fright persons to heaven; but I think it is a reasonable thing to endeavour to fright persons away from hell. They stand upon its brink, and are just ready to fall into it, and are senseless of their danger. Is it not a reasonable thing to fright a person out of a house on fire? The word *fright* is commonly used for sudden, causeless fear, or groundless surprise; but surely a just fear, for which there is good reason, is not to be spoken against under any such name.

SECT. II.

What are distinguishing, scripture evidences of a work of the Spirit of God.

Having shewn, in some instances, what are not evidences that a work wrought among a people, is not a work of the Spirit of God, I now proceed, in the second place, as was proposed, to shew positively what are the sure, distinguishing, scripture evidences and marks of a work of the Spirit of God, by which we may proceed in judging of any operation we find in ourselves, or see among a people, without danger of being misled.—And in this, as I said before, I shall confine myself wholly to those marks which are given us by the apostle in the chapter wherein is my text, where this matter is particularly handled, and more plainly and fully than any where-else in the Bible. And in speaking to these marks, I shall take them in the order in which I find them in the chapter.

I. When the operation is such as to raise their esteem of that Jesus who was born of the Virgin, and was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem; and seems more to confirm and establish their minds in the truth of what the gospel declares to us of his being the Son of God, and the Saviour of men; is a sure sign that it is from the Spirit of God. This sign the apostle gives us in the 2 and 3 verses, “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; and every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.” This implies a confessing not only that there was such a person who appeared in Palestine, and did and suffered those things that are recorded of him, but that he was Christ, i. e. the Son of God, anointed to be Lord and Saviour, as the name Jesus Christ implies. That thus much is implied in the apostle’s meaning, is confirmed by the 15th verse, where the apostle is still on the same subject of signs of the true spirit; “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” And it is to be observed that the word *confess*, as it is often used in the New Testament, signifies more than merely *allowing*: It implies an establishing and confirming of a thing by testimony, and declaring it with manifestation of esteem and affection; so Matt. x. 32. “Whosoever therefore shall *confess* me before men,

him will I *confess* also before my Father which is in heaven, Rom. xv. 9. "I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name." And Phil. ii. 11. That every tongue shall *confess* that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And that this is the force of the expression, as the Apostle John uses it in the place, is confirmed in the next chapter, ver. 1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God, and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." And by that parallel place of the Apostle Paul, where we have the same rule given to distinguish the true spirit from all counterfeits, 1 Cor. xii. 3. "Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed (or will shew an ill or mean esteem of him) and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

So that if the spirit that is at work among a people is plainly observed to work so as to convince them of Christ, and lead them to him—to confirm their minds in the belief of the history of Christ as he appeared in the flesh—and that he is the Son of God, and was sent of God to save sinners; that he is the only Saviour, and that they stand in great need of him; and if he seems to beget in them higher and more honourable thoughts of him than they used to have, and to incline their affections more to him; it is a sure sign that it is the true and right Spirit; however incapable we may be to determine, whether that conviction and affection be in that manner, or to that degree, as to be saving or not.

But the words of the apostle are remarkable; the person to whom the spirit gives testimony, and for whom he raises their esteem, must be that Jesus who appeared in the flesh, and not another Christ in his stead; nor any mystical, fantastical Christ; such as the light within. This the spirit of Quakers extols, while it diminishes their esteem of and dependance upon an outward Christ—or Jesus as he came in the flesh—and leads them off from him; but the spirit that gives testimony for that Jesus, and leads to him, can be no other than the Spirit of God.

The devil has the most bitter and implacable enmity against that person, especially in his character of the Saviour of men; he mortally hates the story and doctrine of his redemption; he never would go about to beget in men more honourable thoughts of him, and lay greater weight on his instructions and commands. The spirit that inclines men's hearts to the seed of the woman, is not the spirit of the serpent that has

such an irreconcilable enmity against him. He that heightens men's esteem of the glorious Michael, that prince of the angels, is not the spirit of the dragon that is at war with him.

II. When the spirit that is at work operates against the interests of Satan's kingdom, which lies in encouraging and establishing sin, and cherishing men's worldly lusts; this is a sure sign that it is a true, and not a false spirit. This sign we have given us in the 4th and 5th verses. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them." Here is a plain antithesis: it is evident that the apostle is still comparing those that are influenced by the two opposite kinds of spirits, the true and the false, and shewing the difference; the one is of God, and overcomes the spirit of the world; the other is of the world, and speaks and savours the things of the world. The spirit of the devil is here called, "he that is in the world." Christ says, "My kingdom is not of this world." But it is otherwise with Satan's kingdom; he is "the God of this world."

What the apostle means by *the world*, or "the things that are of the world," we learn by his own words, in the 2d chapter of this epistle, 15th and 16th verses. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." So that by the world the apostle evidently means every thing that appertains to the interest of sin, and comprehends all the corruptions and lusts of men, and all those acts and objects by which they are gratified.

So that we may safely determine, from what the apostle says, that the spirit that is at work amongst a people, after such a manner, as to lessen men's esteem of the pleasures, profits and honours of the world, and to take off their hearts from an eager pursuit after these things; and to engage them in a deep concern about a future and eternal happiness which the gospel reveals—and puts them upon earnestly seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and the spirit that convinces them of the dreadfulfulness of sin, the guilt it brings, and the misery to which it exposes, must needs be the Spirit of God.

It is not to be supposed that Satan would convince men of sin, and awaken the conscience; it can no way serve his end,

to make that candle of the Lord shine the brighter, and to open the mouth of that vicegerent of God in the soul. It is for his interest, whatever he does, to lull conscience asleep, and keep it quiet. To have that, with its eyes and mouth open in the soul, will tend to clog and hinder all his designs of darkness, and evermore to disturb his affairs, to cross his interest, and disquiet him, so that he can manage nothing to his mind without molestation. Would the devil, when he is about to establish men in sin, take such a course, in the first place, to enlighten and awaken the conscience to see the dreadfulfulness of sin, and make them exceedingly afraid of it and sensible of their misery by reason of their past sins, and their great need of deliverance from their guilt? Would he make them more careful, inquisitive, and watchful to discern what is sinful; and to avoid future sins; and so more afraid of the devil's temptations, and more careful to guard against them? What do those men do with their reason, that suppose that the spirit that operates thus, is the spirit of the devil?

Possibly some may say, that the devil may even awaken men's consciences to deceive them, and make them think they have been the subjects of a saving work of the Spirit of God, while they are indeed still in the gall of bitterness. But to this it may be replied, that the man who has an awakened conscience, is the least likely to be deceived of any man in the world; it is the drowsy, insensible, stupid conscience that is most easily blinded. The more sensible conscience is in a diseased soul, the less easily is it quieted without a real healing. The more sensible conscience is made of the dreadfulfulness of sin, and of the greatness of a man's own guilt, the less likely is he to rest in his own righteousness, or to be pacified with nothing but shadows. A man that has been thoroughly terrified with a sense of his own danger and misery, is not easily flattered and made to believe himself safe, without any good grounds.—To awaken conscience, and convince of the evil of sin, cannot tend to establish it, but certainly tends to make way for sin and satan's being cut out. Therefore this is a good argument that the spirit that operates thus, cannot be the spirit of the devil; except we suppose that Christ knew not how to argue, who told the pharisees—who supposed that the spirit by which he wrought, was the spirit of the devil—that *Satan would not cast out Satan*, Matt. xii. 25, 26.—And therefore, if we see persons made sensible of the dreadful nature of sin, and of the displeasure of God against it; of their own miserable condition as they are in themselves, by reason of

sin, and earnestly concerned for their eternal salvation—and sensible of their need of God's pity and help, and engaged to seek it in the use of the means that God has appointed—we may certainly conclude that it is from the Spirit of God, whatever effects this concern has on their bodies; though it cause them to cry out aloud, or to shriek, or to faint; or, though it throw them into convulsions, or whatever other way the blood and spirits are moved.

The influence of the Spirit of God is yet more abundantly manifest, if persons have their hearts *drawn off* from the world, and weaned from the objects of their worldly lusts, and taken off from worldly pursuits, by the sense they have of the excellency of divine things, and the affection they have to those spiritual enjoyments of another world, that are promised in the gospel,

III. The spirit that operates in such a manner, as to cause in men a greater regard to the holy Scriptures, and establishes them more in their truth and divinity, is certainly the Spirit of God. This rule the apostle gives us in the 6th verse: "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us: he that is not of God heareth not us: hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." *We are of God*; that is, "We the apostles, are sent forth of God, and appointed by him to teach the world, and to deliver those doctrines and instructions, which are to be their rule; *he that knoweth God, heareth us, &c.*"—The apostle's argument here equally reaches all that in the same sense are *of God*; that is, all those that God has appointed and inspired to deliver to his church its rule of faith and practice; all the prophets and apostles, whose doctrine God has made the foundation on which he has built his church, as in Eph. ii. 20. in a word, all the penmen of the holy Scriptures. The devil never would attempt to beget in persons a regard to that divine word which God has given to be the great and standing rule for the direction of his church in all religious matters, and all concerns of their souls, in all ages. A spirit of delusion will not incline persons to seek direction at the mouth of God. To the law and to the testimony, is never the cry of those evil spirits that have no light in them; for it is God's own direction to discover their delusions. Isa. viii. 19, 20. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?"

To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The devil does not say the same as Abraham did, "They have Moses and the prophets let them hear them : " nor the same that the voice from heaven did concerning Christ, "Hear ye him." Would the spirit of error, in order to deceive men, beget in them a high opinion of the infallible rule, and incline them to think much of it, and be very conversant with it? Would the prince of darkness, in order to promote his kingdom of darkness, lead men to the sun? The devil has ever shewn a mortal spite and hatred towards that holy book the Bible : He has done all in his power to extinguish that light ; and to draw men off from it : he knows it to be that light by which his kingdom of darkness is to be overthrown. He has had for many ages experience of its power to defeat his purposes, and baffle his designs : it is his constant plague. It is the main weapon which Michael uses in his war with him : it is the sword of the spirit, that pierces him and conquers him. It is that great and strong sword, with which God punishes Leviathan, that crooked serpent. It is that sharp sword that we read of Rev. xix. 15. that proceeds out of the mouth of him that sat on the horse, with which he smites his enemies. Every text is a dart to torment the old serpent. He has felt the stinging smart thousands of times ; therefore he is engaged against the Bible, and hates every word in it : and we may be sure that he never will attempt to raise persons' esteem of it, or affection to it. And accordingly we see it common in enthusiasts, that they depreciate this written rule, and set up the light within or some other rule above it.

IV. Another rule to judge of spirits may be drawn from those compellations given to the opposite spirits, in the last words of the 6th verse, "The spirit of truth and the spirit of error." These words exhibit the two opposite characters of the Spirit of God, and other spirits that counterfeit his operations. And therefore, if by observing the manner of the operation of a spirit that is at work among a people, we see, that it operates, as a spirit of truth, leading persons to truth, convincing them of those things that are true, we may safely determine that it is a right and true spirit. For instance, if we observe that the spirit at work, makes men more sensible than they used to be, that there is a God, and that he is a great and a sin-hating God ; that life is short, and very uncertain ; and that there is another world ; that they have

immortal souls, and must give account of themselves to God; that they are exceeding sinful by nature and practice; that they are helpless in themselves; and confirms them in other things that are agreeable to some sound doctrine; the spirit works thus, operates as a spirit of truth; he represents things as they truly are. He brings men to the light; for whatever makes truth manifest is light; as the apostle Paul observes, Eph. ver. 13. "But all things that are reprov'd (or discovered as it is in the margin) are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light." And therefore we may conclude, that it is not the spirit of darkness that doth thus discover, and make manifest the truth. Christ tells us that satan is a liar, and the father of lies; and his kingdom is a kingdom of darkness. It is upheld and promoted only by darkness and error. Satan has all his power and dominion by darkness. Hence we read of the power of darkness. Luke xxii. 53. and Col. i. 13. And devils are called "the rulers of the darkness of this world." Whatever spirit removes our darkness, and brings us to the light; undeceives us, and by convincing us of the truth, doth us a kindness. If I am brought to a sight of truth, and am made sensible of things as they really are, my duty is immediately to thank God for it, without standing first to enquire by what means I have such a benefit.

V. If the spirit that is at work among a people operates as a spirit of love to God and man, it is a sure sign that it is the spirit of God. This sign the apostle insists upon from the 6 verse, to the end of the chapter. Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love, &c." Here it is evident, that the apostle is still comparing those two sorts of persons that are influenced by the opposite kinds of spirits; and mentions love as a mark by which we may know who has the true spirit: but this is especially evident by the 12th and 13th verses, "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us: hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit." In these verses love is spoken of as if it were that wherein the very nature of the holy spirit consisted; or, as if *divine love* dwelling in us, and the *spirit of God* dwelling in us, were the same thing; as it is also in the last two verses of the foregoing chapter; and in the 16th verse of this chapter. Therefore this last mark which

the apostle gives of the true spirit he seems to speak of as the most eminent; and so insists much more largely upon it, than upon all the rest; and speaks expressly of both love to God and men; of *love to men* in the 7th, 11th, and 12th verses; and of *love to God*, in the 17th, 18th, and 19th verses; and of both together, in the last two verses; and of love to men, as arising from love to God, in these last two verses.

Therefore, when the spirit that is at work amongst the people, tends this way, and brings many of them to high and exalting thoughts of the divine being, and his glorious perfections: and works in them an admiring, delightful sense of the excellency of Jesus Christ; representing him as the chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely, and makes him precious to the soul; winning and drawing the heart with those motives and incitements to love, of which the apostle speaks in that passage of scripture we are upon, viz. the wonderful, free love of God in giving his only begotten Son to die for us and the wonderful dying love of Christ to us, who had no love to him, but were his enemies; must needs be the spirit of God, as ver. 9, 10. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And ver. 16. "And we have known, and believed the love that God hath to us," and ver. 19. "We love him because he first loved us." The spirit that excites to love on these motives, and makes the attributes of God as revealed in the gospel, and manifested in Christ, delightful objects of contemplation; and makes the soul to long after God and Christ—after their presence and communion, acquaintance with them, and conformity to them—and to live so as to please and honour them: the spirit that quells contentions among men, and gives a spirit of peace and good will, excites to acts of outward kindness, and earnest desires of the salvation of souls—and causes a delight in those that appear as the children of God, and followers of Christ; I say, when a spirit operates after this manner among a people, there is the highest kind of evidence of the influence of a true and divine spirit.

Indeed there is a counterfeit love, that often appears among those who are led by a spirit of delusion. There is commonly in the wildest enthusiasts, a kind of union and affection, arising from self-love, occasioned by their agreeing

in those things wherein they greatly differ from all others, and from which they are objects of the ridicule of all the rest of mankind. This naturally will cause them so much the more to prize those peculiarities that make them the objects of others' contempt. Thus the ancient Gnosticks, and the wild fanaticks that appeared in the beginning of the reformation, boasted of their great love one to another; one sect of them in particular, calling themselves the *family of love*. But this is quite another thing than that christian love I have just described: it is only the working of a natural self-love, and no true benevolence, any more than the union and friendship which may be among a company of pirates, that are at war with all the rest of the world. There is enough said in this passage of the nature of a truly christian love, thoroughly to distinguish it from all such counterfeits. It is love that arises from apprehension of the wonderful riches of the free grace and sovereignty of God's love to us, in Christ Jesus; being attended with a sense of our own utter unworthiness, as in ourselves the enemies and haters of God and Christ, and with a renunciation of all our own excellency and righteousness. See ver. 9, 10, 11, and 19. The surest character of true divine supernatural love—distinguishing it from counterfeits that arise from a natural self-love—is, that the christian virtue of *humility* shines in it; that which above all others renounces, abases, and annihilates what we term *self*. Christian love or true charity, is a humble love. 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. "Charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked." When therefore we see love in persons attended with a sense of their own littleness, vileness, weakness, and utter insufficiency; and so with self-diffidence, self-emptiness, self renunciation, and poverty of spirit, then are the manifest tokens of the spirit of God. He that thus dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him. What the apostle speaks of as a great evidence of the true spirit, is God's love or Christ's love; as ver. 12—"his love is perfected in us." What kind of love that is, we may see best in what appeared in Christ's example. The love that appeared in that Lamb of God, was not only a love to friends, but to enemies, and a love attended with a meek and humble spirit. "Learn of me," says he, "for I am meek and lowly in heart."—Love and humility are two things the most contrary to the spirit of the devil, of any thing in the world; for the character of that evil spirit, above all things, consists in pride and malice.

Thus I have spoken particularly to the several marks the apostle gives us of a work of the true spirit. There are some of these things which the devil *would not* do if he could: thus he would not awaken the conscience, and make men sensible of their miserable state by reason of sin, and sensible of their great need of a saviour; and he would not confirm men in the belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Saviour of sinners, or raise men's value and esteem of him: he would not beget in men's minds an opinion of the necessity, usefulness, and truth of the holy scriptures, or incline them to make much use of them; nor would he shew men the truth, in things that concern their soul's interest; to undeceive them, and lead them out of darkness into light, and give them a view of things as they really are. And there are other things that the devil *neither can nor will* do: he will not give men a spirit of divine love, or christian humility and poverty of spirit; nor *could* he if he would. He cannot give those things he has not himself: these things are as contrary as possible to his nature. And therefore when there is an extraordinary influence or operation appearing on the minds of a people, if these things are found in it, we are safe in determining that it is the work of God, whatever other circumstances it may be attended with, whatever instruments are used, whatever methods are taken to promote it; whatever means a sovereign God, whose judgments are a great deep, employs to carry it on; and whatever motion there may be of the animal spirits, whatever effects may be wrought on men's bodies. These marks, that the apostle has given us, are sufficient to stand alone, and support themselves. They plainly shew *the finger of God*, and are sufficient to outweigh a thousand such little objections, as many make from oddities, irregularities, errors in conduct, and the delusions and scandals of some professors.

But here some may *object* to the sufficiency of the marks given, what the apostle Paul says, in 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."

To which I *answer*, that this can be no objection against the sufficiency of these marks to distinguish the true from the false spirit, in those false apostles and prophets, in whom the devil was transformed into an angel of light, because it is principally with a view to them that the apostle gives these marks; as appears by the words of the text, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; and this is the

reason he gives, because many false prophets are gone out into the world: *viz.* ‘There are many gone out into the world who are the ministers of the devil, who transform themselves into the prophets of God, in whom the spirit of the devil is transformed into an angel of light; therefore try the spirits by these rules that I shall give you, that you may be able to distinguish the true spirit from the false, under such a crafty disguise.’ Those *false prophets* the apostle *John* speaks of, are doubtless the same sort of men with those *false apostles*, and deceitful workers, that the apostle *Paul* speaks of, in whom the devil was transformed into an angel of light: and therefore we may be sure that these marks are especially adapted to distinguish between the true spirit, and the devil transformed into an angel of light, because they are given especially for that end; that is the apostle’s declared purpose and design, to give marks by which the true spirit may be distinguished from that sort of counterfeits.

And if we look over what is said about these false prophets, and false apostles, (as there is much said about them in the new Testament) and take notice in what manner the devil was transformed into an angel of light in them, we shall not find any thing that in the least injures the sufficiency of these marks to distinguish the true spirit from such counterfeits. The devil transformed himself into an angel of light, as there was in them a shew, and great boast of extraordinary knowledge in divine things; Col. ii. 8. 1 Tim. i. 6, 7. and chap. vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 Tim. ii. 14,—18. Tit. i. 10, 16. Hence their followers called themselves *Gnosticks*, from their great pretended knowledge: and the devil in them mimicked the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, in visions, revelations, prophecies, miracles, &c. Hence they are called false apostles, and false prophets: see Matt. xxiv. 24. Again, there was a false shew of, and lying pretensions to great holiness and devotion in words: Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Ephes. iv. 14. Hence they are called deceitful workers, and wells, and clouds without water. 2 Cor. xi. 13. 2 Pet. ii. 17. Jude 12. There was also in them a shew of extraordinary piety and righteousness in their superstitious worship: Col. ii. 16—23. So they had a false, proud and bitter zeal; Gal. iv. 17, 18. 1 Tim. i. 6. and chap. vi. 4, 5. And likewise a false shew of humility, in affecting an extraordinary outward meanness and dejection, when indeed they were “vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind:” and made a righteousness of their humility, and were exceedingly lifted up with their eminent piety: Col. ii. 18, 23.

But how do such things as these, in the least injure those things that have been mentioned as the distinguishing evidences of the true spirit?—Besides such vain shews which may be from the devil, these are common influences of the spirit, which are often mistaken for saving grace; but these are out of the question, because though they are not saving, yet are the work of the true spirit.

Having thus fulfilled what I at first proposed, in considering what are the certain, distinguishing marks, by which we may safely proceed in judging of any work that falls under our observation, whether it be the work of the spirit of God or no. I now proceed to the APPLICATION.

SECT. III.

Practical inferences.

I. From what has been said, I will venture to draw this inference, viz. *That the extraordinary influence that has lately appeared, causing an uncommon concern and engagedness of mind about the things of religion, is undoubtedly, in the general from the spirit of God.* There are but two things that need to be known in order to such a work's being judged of, viz. *Facts and rules.* The *rules* of the word of God we have had laid before us; and as to *facts*, there are but two ways that we can come at them, so as to be in a capacity to compare them with the rules, either by our own observation or by information from others who have had opportunity to observe them.

As to this work, there are many things concerning it that are notorious, and which, unless the apostle John was out in his rules, are sufficient to determine it to be in general the work of God. The spirit that is at work, takes off persons' minds from the vanities of the world, and engages them in a deep concern about eternal happiness, and puts them upon earnestly seeking their salvation, and convinces them of the dreadfulfulness of sin, and of their own guilty and miserable state as they are by nature. It awakens men's consciences, and makes them sensible of the dreadfulfulness of God's anger, and causes in them a great desire and earnest care and endeavour to obtain his favour. It puts them upon a more diligent improvement of the means of grace which God has appointed; accompanied with a greater regard to the word of God, a desire of hearing and reading it, and of being more conversant

with it than they used to be. And it is notoriously manifest, that the spirit that is at work, in general, operates as a spirit of truth, making persons more sensible of what is really true in those things that concern their eternal salvation: As that they must die, and that life is very short and uncertain; that there is a great sin-hating God, to whom they are accountable, and who will fix them in an eternal state in another world; and that they stand in great need of a Saviour. It makes persons more sensible of the value of Jesus who was crucified, and their need of him; and that it puts them upon earnestly seeking an interest in him. It cannot be but that these things should be apparent to people in general throughout the land; for these things are not done in a corner; the work has not been confined to a few towns, in some remoter parts, but has been carried on in many places all over the land, and in most of the principal, the populous, and public places in it. Christ in this respect has wrought amongst us, in the same manner that he wrought his miracles in Judea. It has now been continued for a considerable time; so that there has been a great opportunity to observe the manner of the work. And all such as have been very conversant with the subjects of it, see a great deal more, that by the rules of the apostle, does clearly and certainly shew it to be the work of God.

And here I would observe, that the nature and tendency of a spirit that is at work, may be determined with much greater certainty, and less danger of being imposed upon, when it is observed in a great multitude of people of all sorts, and in various places, than when it is only seen in a few, in some particular place, that have been much conversant one with another. A few particular persons may agree to put a cheat upon others, by a false pretence, and professing things of which they never were conscious. But when the work is spread over great parts of a country, in places distant from one another, among people of all sorts and of all ages, and in multitudes possessed of a sound mind, good understanding, and known integrity; there would be the greatest absurdity in supposing, from all the observation that can be made by all that is heard from, and seen in them—for many months together, and by those who are most intimate with them in these affairs, and have long been acquainted with them—that yet it cannot be determined what kind of influence the operation they are under, has upon people's minds, can it not be determined whether it tends to awaken their consciences, or to stupify them; whether it inclines them more to seek their

salvation, or neglect it; whether it seems to confirm them in a belief of the scriptures, or to lead them to Deism; whether it makes them have more regard for the great truths of religion, or less?

And here it is to be observed, that for persons to profess that they are so convinced of certain divine truths, as to esteem and love them in a *saving manner*; and for them to profess, that they are *more convinced* or confirmed in the truth of them, than they used to be, and find that they have a greater regard to them than they had before, are two very different things. Persons of honesty and common sense, have much greater right to demand credit to be given to the latter profession, than to the former. Indeed in the former, it is less likely that a people in general should be deceived, than some particular persons. But whether person's convictions, and the alteration in their dispositions and affections, be in a degree and manner that is saving, is beside the present question. If there be such effects on people's judgments, dispositions and affections, as have been spoken of, whether they be in a degree and manner that is saving or no, it is nevertheless a sign of the influence of the Spirit of God. Scripture rules serve to distinguish the common influences of the Spirit of God, as well as those that are saving, from the influence of other causes.

And as, by the providence of God, I have for some months past, been much amongst those who have been the subjects of the work in question; and particularly, have been in the way of seeing and observing those extraordinary things with which many persons have been offended;—such as persons crying out aloud, shrieking, being put into great agonies of body, &c.—and have seen the manner and issue of such operations, and the fruits of them, for several months together; many of them being persons with whom I have been intimately acquainted in soul concerns, before and since; so I look upon myself called on this occasion to give my testimony, that—so far as the nature and tendency of such a work is capable of falling under the observation of a by-stander, to whom those that have been the subjects of it have endeavoured to open their hearts, or can be come at by diligent and particular enquiry—this work has all those marks that have been pointed out. And this has been the case in very many instances, in *every article*; and in many others, all those marks have appeared in a very *great degree*.

The subjects of these uncommon appearances, have been

of two sorts ; either those who have been in great distress from an apprehension of their sin and misery ; or those who have been overcome with a sweet sense of the greatness, wonderfulness and excellency of divine things. Of the multitude of those of the former sort, that I have had opportunity to observe, these have been very few, but their distress has arisen apparently from real proper conviction, and being in a degree sensible of that which was the truth. And though I do not suppose, when such things were observed to be common, that persons have laid themselves under those violent restraints to avoid outward manifestations of their distress, that perhaps they otherwise would have done ; yet there have been very few in whom there has been any appearance of feigning or affecting such manifestations, and very many for whom it would have been undoubtedly utterly impossible for them to avoid them. Generally, in these agonies they have appeared to be in the perfect exercise of their reason ; and those of them who could speak, have been well able to give an account of the circumstances of their mind, and the cause of their distress, at the time, and were able to remember, and give an account of it afterwards. I have known a very few instances of those, who, in their great extremity, have for a short space been deprived, in some measure, of the use of reason ; but among the many hundreds, and it may be thousands, that have lately been brought to such agonies, I never yet knew one, lastingly deprived of their reason. In some that I have known, melancholy has evidently been mixt ; and when it is so, the difference is very apparent ; their distresses are of another kind, and operate quite after another manner, than when their distress is from mere conviction. It is not truth only that distresses them, but many vain shadows and notions that will not give place either to scripture or reason. Some in their great distress have not been well able to give an account of themselves, or to declare the sense they have of things, or to explain the manner and cause of their trouble to others, that yet I have had no reason to think were not under proper convictions, and in whom there has been manifested a good issue. But this will not be at all wondered at, by those who have had much to do with souls under spiritual difficulties, some things of which they are sensible, are altogether new to them ; their ideas and inward sensations are new, and what they therefore know not how to express in words. Some, who on first enquiry, said they knew not what was the matter with them, have on being particularly exa-

mined and interrogated, been able to represent their case, though of themselves they could not find expressions, and forms of speech to do it.

Some suppose, that terrors producing such effects, are only a fright. But certainly there ought to be a distinction made between a very great fear, or extreme distress arising from an apprehension of some dreadful truth—a cause fully proportionable to such an effect—and a needless, causeless fright. The latter is of two kinds; either, first when persons are terrified with that which is not the truth; (of which I have seen very few instances unless in case of melancholy;) or, secondly, when they are in a fright from some terrible outward appearance and noise, and a general notion thence arising. These apprehend, that there is something or other terrible, they know not what; without having in their minds any particular truth whatever. Of such a kind of fright I have seen very little appearance, among either old or young.

Those who are in such extremity, commonly express a great sense of their exceeding wickedness, the multitude and aggravations of their actual sins; their dreadful pollution, enmity, and perverseness; their obstinacy and hardness of heart; a sense of their great guilt in the sight of God; and the dreadfulfulness of the punishment due to sin. Very often they have a lively idea of the horrible pit of eternal misery; and at the same time it appears to them, that the great God who has them in his hands, is exceeding angry, and his wrath appears amazingly terrible to them. God appears to them so much provoked, and his great wrath so increased; that they are apprehensive of great danger, and that he will not bear with them any longer; but will now forthwith, cut them off, and send them down to the dreadful pit they have in view; at the same time seeing no refuge. They see more and more of the vanity of every thing they used to trust to, and with which they flattered themselves, till they are brought wholly to despair in all, and to see that they are at the disposal of the mere will of that God who is so angry with them. Very many, in the midst of their extremity, have been brought to an extraordinary sense of their fully deserving that wrath, and the destruction which was then before their eyes. They feared every moment, that it would be executed upon them; they have been greatly convinced that this would be altogether just, and that God is indeed absolutely sovereign. Very often, some text of scripture expressing God's sovereignty,

has been set home upon their minds, whereby they have been calmed. They have been brought, as it were, to lie at God's feet; and after great agonies, a little before light has arisen, they have been composed and quiet, in submission to a just and sovereign God; but their bodily strength much spent. Sometimes their lives, to appearance, were almost gone; and then light has appeared, and a glorious Redeemer, with his wonderful, all-sufficient grace, has been represented to them often, in some sweet invitation of scripture. Sometimes the light comes in suddenly, sometimes more gradually, filling their souls with love, admiration, joy, and self-abasement: drawing forth their hearts after the excellent lovely Redeemer, and longings to lie in the dust before him; and that others might behold, embrace, and be delivered by him. They had longings to live to his glory; but were sensible that they can do nothing of themselves, appearing vile in their own eyes, and having much jealousy over their own hearts. And all the appearances of a real change of heart have followed; and grace has acted, from time to time, after the same manner that it used to act in those that were converted formerly, with the like difficulties, temptations, buffetings, and comforts; excepting that in many, the light and comfort have been in higher degrees than ordinary. Many very young children have been thus wrought upon. There have been some instances very much like those (Mark i. 26. and chap. ix. 26.) of whom we read, that "when the devil had cried with a loud voice, and rent them sore, he came out of them." And probably those instances were designed for a type of such things as these. Some have several turns of great agonies, before they are delivered; and others have been in such distress, which has passed off, and no deliverance at all has followed.

Some object against it as great confusion, when there is a number together in such circumstances making a noise; and say, God cannot be the author of it; because he is the God of order, not of confusion. But let it be considered, what is the proper notion of confusion, but the breaking that order of things, whereby they are properly disposed, and duly directed to their end, so that the order and due connection of means being broken, they fail of their end. Now the conviction of sinners for their conversion is the obtaining of the end of religious means. Not but that I think the persons thus extrarodinarily moved, should endeavour to refrain from such outward manifestations, what they well can, and should refrain to their utmost, at the time of their solemn worship. But if

God is pleased to convince the consciences of persons, so that they cannot avoid great outward manifestations, even to interrupting, and breaking off those public means they were attending, I do not think this is confusion, or an unhappy interruption, any more than if a company should meet on the field to pray for rain, and should be broken off from their exercise by a plentiful shower. Would to God that all the public assemblies in the land were broken off, from their public exercises with such confusion as this the next sabbath day! We need not be sorry for breaking the order of means, by obtaining the end to which that order is directed. He who is going to fetch a treasure, need not be sorry that he is stopped, by meeting the treasure in the midst of his journey.

Besides those who are overcome with conviction and distress, I have seen many of late, who have had their bodily strength taken away with a sense of the glorious excellency of the Redeemer, and the wonders of his dying love; with a very uncommon sense of their own littleness and exceeding vileness attending it, with all expressions and appearances of the greatest abasement and abhorrence of themselves. Not only new converts, but many who were, as we hope, formerly converted, have had their love and joy attended with a flood of tears, and a great appearance of contrition and humiliation, especially for their having lived no more to God's glory since their conversion. These have had a far greater sight of their vileness, and the evil of their hearts, than ever they had; with an exceeding earnestness of desire to live better for the time to come, but attended with greater self-diffidence than ever: and many have been overcome with pity to the souls of others, and longing for their salvation.—And many other things I might mention, in this extraordinary work, answering to every one of those marks which have been insisted on. So that if the Apostle John knew how to give signs of a work of the true spirit, this is such a work.

Providence has cast my lot in a place where the work of God has *formerly* been carried on. I had the happiness to be settled in that place two years with the venerable STODARD; and was then acquainted with a number who, during that season, were wrought upon under his ministry. I have been intimately acquainted with the experiences of many others who were wrought upon under his ministry, before that period, in a manner agreeable to the doctrine of all orthodox Divines. And of late, a work has been carried on there, with very much of uncommon operations; but it is evidently the same work,

that was carried on there, in different periods, though attended with some new circumstances. And certainly we must throw by all talk of conversion and christian experience; and not only so, but we must throw by our Bibles, and give up revealed religion, if this be not in general the work of God. Not that I suppose the degree of the spirit's influence, is to be determined by the degree of effect on men's bodies; or, that those are always the best experiences, which have the greatest influence on the body.

And as to the imprudencies, irregularities, and mixture of delusion that has been observed; it is not at all to be wondered at, that a reformation, after a long continued and almost universal deadness, should at first, when the revival is new, be attended with such things. In the first creation God did not make a compleat world at once; but there was a great deal of imperfection, darkness, and mixture of chaos and confusion, after God first said, "Let there be light," before the whole stood forth in perfect form. When God at first began his great work for the deliverance of his people, after their long continued bondage in Egypt, there were false wonders mixed with the true for a while; which hardened the unbelieving Egyptians, and made them to doubt of the divinity of the whole work. When the children of Israel first went to bring up the ark of God, after it had been neglected, and had been long absent, they sought not the Lord after the due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13. At the time when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them. And Solomon's ships, when they brought gold, and silver, and pearls, also brought apes and peacocks. When day-light first appears after a night of darkness, we must expect to have darkness mixt with light, for a while, and not have perfect day, and the sun risen at once. The fruits of the earth are first green before they are ripe, and come to their proper perfection gradually; and so Christ tells us, is the kingdom of God. Mark iv. 26, 27, 28. "So is the kingdom of God; as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day; and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how: for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade; then the ear; then the full corn in the ear."

The imprudencies and errors that have attended this work, are the less to be wondered at, if it be considered, that chiefly young persons have been the subjects of it, who have less steadiness and experience, and being in the heat of youth, are

much more ready to run to extremes. Satan will keep men secure as long as he can ; but when he can do that no longer, he often endeavours to drive them to extremes, and so to dishonour God, and wound religion in that way. And doubtless it has been one occasion of much misconduct, that in many places, people see plainly that their ministers have an ill opinion of the work ; and therefore, with just reason, durst not apply themselves to them as their guides in it ; and so are without guides.—No wonder then that when a people are as sheep without a shepherd, they wander out of the way. A people in such circumstances, stand in great and continual need of guides, and their guides stand in continual need of much more wisdom than they have of their own. And if a people have ministers that favour the work, and rejoice in it, yet it is not to be expected that, either the people or ministers, should know so well how to conduct themselves in such an extraordinary state of things—while it is new, and what they never had any experience of before, and time to see their tendency, consequences and issue. The happy influence of experience is very manifest at this day, in the people among whom God has settled my abode. The work which has been carried on there this year, has been much purer than that which was wrought there six years before : it has seemed to be more purely spiritual ; free from natural and corrupt mixtures, and any thing savouring of enthusiastic wildness and extravagance. It has wrought more by deep humiliation and abasement before God and men ; and they have been much freer from imprudences and irregularities. And particularly there has been a remarkable difference in this respect, that whereas many before, in their comforts and rejoicings, did too much forget their distance from God, and were ready in their conversation together of the things of God, and of their own experiences, to talk with too much lightness ; but now they seem to have no disposition that way, but rejoice with a more solemn, reverential, humble joy ; as God directs. (Psal. ii. 11.) Not because the joy is not as great, and in many instances much greater. Many among us who were wrought upon in that former season, have now had much greater communications from heaven than they had then. Their rejoicing operates in another manner ; it abases them, breaks their hearts, and brings them into the dust. When they speak of their joys, it is not with laughter, but a flood of tears. Thus those that laughed before, weep now, and yet by their united testimony, their joy is vastly purer and sweeter than that which

before did more raise their animal spirits. They are now more like Jacob, when God appeared to him at Bethel, when he saw the ladder that reached to heaven, and said, "How dreadful is this place?" And like Moses, when God shewed him his glory on the mount, when he made haste and "bowed himself unto the earth."

II. Let us all be hence warned, *by no means to oppose, or do any thing in the least to clog or hinder the work; but, on the contrary, do our utmost to promote it.* Now Christ is come down from heaven in a remarkable and wonderful work of his spirit, it becomes all his professed disciples to acknowledge him, and give him honour.

The example of the Jews in Christ's and the apostle's times, is enough to beget in those who do not acknowledge this work, a great jealousy of themselves, and to make them exceeding cautious of what they say or do. Christ then was in the world, and the world knew him not: he came to his own professing people, and his own received him not. That coming of Christ had been much spoken of in the prophecies of Scripture which they had in their hands, and it had been long expected; and yet because Christ came in a manner they did not expect, and which was not agreeable to their carnal reason, they would not own him. Nay they opposed him, counted him a madman, and pronounced the spirit that he wrought by to be the spirit of the devil. They stood and wondered at the great things done, and knew not what to make of them; but yet they met with so many stumbling blocks, that they finally could not acknowledge him. And when the Spirit of God came to be poured out so wonderfully in the apostles' days, they looked upon it as confusion and distraction. They were *astonished* by what they saw and heard, but not *convinced*. And especially was the work of God then rejected by those that were most conceited of their own understanding and knowledge, agreeable to Isa. xxix. 14. "Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongst this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." And many who had been in reputation for religion and piety, had a great spite against the work, because they saw it tended to diminish their honour, and to reproach their formality and lukewarmness. Some upon these accounts, maliciously and openly opposed and reproached the work of the Spirit of God, and called it the work of the devil,

against inward conviction, and so were guilty of the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.

There is another, a spiritual coming of Christ, to set up his kingdom in the world, that is as much spoken of in scripture prophecy as that first coming and which has long been expected by the church of God. We have reason to think, from what is said of this, that it will be, in many respects parallel with the other. And certainly, that low state into which the visible church of God has lately been sunk is very parallel with the state of the Jewish church, when Christ came; and therefore no wonder at all, that when Christ comes, his work should appear a strange work to most; yea, it would be a wonder if it should be otherwise. Whether the present work be the beginning of that great and frequently predicted coming of Christ to set up his kingdom, or not, it is evident, from what has been said, that it is a work of the same spirit, and of the same nature. And there is no reason to doubt, but that the conduct of persons who continue long to refuse acknowledging Christ in the work—especially those who are set to be teachers in his church—will be in like manner provoking to God, as it was in the Jews of old, while refusing to acknowledge Christ; notwithstanding what they may plead of the great stumbling blocks that are in the way, and the cause they have to doubt of the work. The teachers of the Jewish church found innumerable stumbling blocks, that were to them insuperable. Many things appeared in Christ, and in the work of the spirit after his ascension, which were exceeding strange to them; they seemed assured that they had just cause for their scruples. Christ and his work were to the Jews a stumbling block; “But blessed is he,” says Christ, “whosoever shall not be offended in me.” As strange and as unexpected as the manner of Christ’s appearance was, yet he had not been long in Judea working miracles, before all those who had opportunity to observe, and yet refused to acknowledge him, brought fearful guilt upon themselves in the sight of God; and Christ condemned them, that though “they could discern the face of the sky, and of the earth, yet they could not discern the signs of those times: and why,” says he, “even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?” Luke xii. at the latter end.

It is not to be supposed that the great Jehovah has bowed the heavens, and appeared here now for so long a time, in such a glorious work of his power and grace—in so extensive a manner, in the most public places of the land, and in almost

all parts of it—without giving such evidences of his presence, that great numbers, and even many teachers in his church, can remain guiltless in his sight, without ever receiving and acknowledging him, and giving him honour, and appearing to rejoice in his gracious presence; or without so much as once giving him thanks for so glorious and blessed a work of his grace, wherein his goodness does more appear, than if he had bestowed on us all the temporal blessings that the world affords. A long continued silence in such a case is undoubtedly provoking to God; especially in ministers. It is a secret kind of opposition, that really tends to hinder the work. Such silent ministers stand in the way of the work of God, as Christ said of old, “He that is not with us is against us.” Those who stand wondering at this strange work, not knowing what to make of it, and refusing to receive it—and ready it may be sometimes to speak contemptibly of it, as was the case with the Jews of old—would do well to consider, and to tremble at St. Paul’s words to them, Acts xiii. 40, 41. “Beware therefore lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. Those who cannot believe the work to be true, because of the extraordinary degree and manner of it, should consider how it was with the unbelieving lord in Samaria, who said, “Behold if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?” To whom Elisha said, “Behold thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.” Let all to whom this work is a cloud and darkness—as the pillar of cloud and fire was to the Egyptians—take heed that it be not their destruction, while it gives light to God’s Israel.

I would intreat those who quiet themselves, that they proceed on a principle of prudence, and are waiting to see the issue of things—and what fruits those that are the subjects of this work will bring forth in their lives and conversations—to consider, whether this will justify a long refraining from acknowledging Christ when he appears so wonderfully and graciously present in the land. It is probable that many of those who are thus waiting, know not for what they are waiting. If they wait to see a work of God without difficulties and stumbling blocks, it will be like the fool’s waiting at the river side to have the water all run by. A work of God without stumbling blocks is never to be expected. “It

must need be that offences come." There never yet was any great manifestation that God made of himself to the world, without many difficulties attending it. It is with the works of God, as with his word : they seem at first full of things that are strange, inconsistent, and difficult to the carnal unbelieving hearts of men. Christ and his work always was, and always will be a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence, a gin and a snare to many. The prophet Hosea, (cha. xiv) speaking of a glorious revival of religion in God's church—when God would be as the dew unto Israel, who should grow as the lilly, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon, whose branches should spread, &c.—concludes all thus ; "Who is wise ? and he shall understand these things ; prudent ? and he shall know them, for the ways of the Lord are right and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein."

It is probable that the stumbling blocks that now attend this work, will in some respects be increased, and not diminished. We probably shall see more instances of apostacy and gross iniquity among professors. And if one kind of stumbling blocks are removed, it is to be expected that others will come. It is with Christ's works as it was with his parables ; things that are difficult to men's dark minds are ordered of purpose, for the trial of their dispositions and spiritual sense ; and that those of corrupt minds and of an unbelieving, perverse, cavilling spirit, "seeing might see and not understand." Those who are now waiting to see the issue of this work, think they shall be better able to determine by and by ; but probably many of them are mistaken. The Jews that saw Christ's miracles, waited to see better evidences of his being the Messiah ; they wanted a sign from heaven ; but they waited in vain ; their stumbling blocks did not diminish, but increase. They found no end to them, and so were more and more hardened in unbelief. Many have been praying for that glorious reformation spoken of in scripture, who knew not what they have been praying for, (as it was with the Jews when they prayed for the coming of Christ) and who, if it should come, would not acknowledge or receive it.

This pretended prudence, in persons waiting so long before they acknowledged this work, will probably in the end prove the greatest imprudence. Hereby they will fail of any share of so great a blessing, and will miss the most

precious opportunity of obtaining divine light, grace and comfort, heavenly and eternal benefits; that God ever gave in New England. While the glorious fountain is set open in so wonderful a manner, and multitudes flock to it and receive a rich supply for the wants of their souls, they stand at a distance, doubting, wondering, and receiving nothing, and are like to continue thus till the precious season is past.—It is indeed to be wondered at, that those who have doubted of the work, which has been attended with such uncommon external appearances, should be easy in their doubts, without taking thorough pains to inform themselves, by going where such things have been to be seen, narrowly observing, and diligently enquiring into them; not contenting themselves with observing two or three instances, nor resting till they were fully informed by their own observation. I do not doubt but that if this course had been taken, it would have convinced all whose minds are not shut up against conviction. How greatly have they erred, who only from the uncertain reproofs of others, have ventured to speak slightly of these things? That caution of an unbelieving Jew might teach them more prudence, Acts v. 38, 39. “Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel, or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found to fight against God.” Whether what has been said in this discourse be enough to produce conviction, that this is the work of God, or not; yet I hope that for the future, they will at least hearken to the caution of Gamaliel, now mentioned; so as not to oppose it or say any thing which has even an indirect tendency to bring it into discredit, lest they should be found opposers of the Holy Ghost. There is no kind of sin so hurtful and dangerous to the souls of men, as those committed against the Holy Ghost. We had better speak against God the Father, or the Son, than to speak against the Holy Spirit in his gracious operations on the hearts of men. Nothing will so much tend for ever to prevent our having any benefit of his operations on our own souls.

If there are any who still resolutely go on to speak contemptibly of these things, I would beg of them to take heed that they be not guilty of the unpardonable sin. When the Holy Spirit is much poured out, and men’s lusts, lukewarmness and hypocrisy are reproached by its powerful operations, then is the most likely time of any, for this sin to

be committed. If the work goes on, it is well if among the many that shew an enmity against it, some be not guilty of this sin, if none have been already. Those who maliciously oppose and reproach this work, and call it the work of the devil, want but one thing of the unpardonable sin, and that is doing it against inward conviction. And though some are so prudent, as not openly to oppose and reproach this work, yet it is to be feared—at this day, when the Lord is going forth so gloriously against his enemies—that many who are silent and inactive, especially ministers, will bring that curse of the angel of the Lord upon themselves, Judg. v. 23. “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord: curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

Since the great God has come down from heaven, and manifested himself in so wonderful a manner in this land, it is vain for any of us to expect any other than to be greatly affected by it in our spiritual state and circumstances, respecting the favour of God, one way or other. Those who do not become more happy by it, will become far more guilty and miserable. It is always so; such a season as proves an acceptable year, and a time of great favour to them who accept and improve it, proves a day of vengeance to others. Isai. lix. 2. When God sends forth his *word*, it shall not return to him void; much less his *Spirit*. When Christ was upon earth in Judea, many slighted and rejected him; but it proved in the issue to be no matter of indifference to them God made all that people to feel that Christ had been among them; those who did not feel it to their comfort, felt it to their great sorrow. When God only sent the prophet Ezekiel to the children of Israel, he declared that whether they would hear or whether they would forbear, yet they should know that there had been a prophet among them; how much more may we suppose that when God has appeared so wonderfully in this land, that he will make every one to know that the great Jehovah had been in New England.—I come now in the last place,

III. To apply myself to those who are the friends of this work, who have been partakers of it, and are zealous to promote it. Let me earnestly exhort such to give diligent heed to themselves to avoid all errors and misconduct, and whatever may darken and obscure the work; and to give no

occasion to those who stand ready to reproach it. The apostle was careful to cut off occasion from those that desired occasion. The same apostle exhorts Titus, to maintain a strict care and watch over himself, that both his preaching and behaviour might be such as "could not be condemned; that he who was of the contrary part might be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of them," Tit. ii. 7, 8. We had need to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. It is of no small consequence that we should at this day, behave ourselves innocently and prudently. We must expect that the great enemy of this work will especially try his utmost with us; and he will especially triumph if he can prevail in any thing to blind and mislead us. He knows it will do more to further his purpose and interest than if he prevailed against an hundred others. We had need to watch and pray, for we are but little children, this roaring lion is too strong for us, and this old serpent too subtil for us.

Humility and self-diffidence, and an entire dependence on our Lord Jesus Christ, will be our best defence. Let us therefore maintain the strictest watch against spiritual pride, or being lifted up with extraordinary experiences and comforts, and the high favours of heaven, that any of us may have received. We had need after such favours, in a special manner to keep a strict and jealous eye upon our own hearts, lest there should arise self-exalting reflections upon what we have received, and high thoughts of ourselves as being now some of the most eminent of saints and peculiar favourites of heaven, and that the secret of the Lord is especially with us. Let us not presume, that we above all are fit to be advanced as the great instructors and censors of this evil generation; and, in a high conceit of our own wisdom and discerning, assume to ourselves the airs of prophets, or extraordinary ambassadors of heaven. When we have great discoveries of God made to our souls, we should not shine bright in our own eyes. Moses, when he had been conversing with God in the mount, though his face shone so as to dazzle the eyes of Aaron and the people, yet he did not shine in his own eyes; "he wist not that his face shone." Let none think themselves out of danger of this spiritual pride, even in their best frames. God saw that the apostle Paul, (though probably the most eminent saint that ever lived) was not out of danger of it, no not when he had just been conversing with God in the third heaven: see 2 Cor. xii. 7. Pride is the worst viper in the heart; it is the first sin that ever entered into the

universe, lies lowest of all in the foundation of the whole building of sin, and is the most secret, deceitful and unsearchable in its ways of working, of any lusts whatever. It is ready to mix with every thing; and nothing is so hateful to God, contrary to the spirit of the gospel, or of so dangerous consequence; and there is no one sin that does so much let in the devil into the hearts of the saints, and expose them to his delusions. I have seen it in many instances, and that in eminent saints. The devil has come in at this door presently after some eminent experience and extraordinary communion with God, and has wofully deluded and led them astray, till God has mercifully opened their eyes and delivered them; and they themselves have afterwards been made sensible that it was pride that betrayed them.

Some of the true friends of the work of God's spirit have erred in giving too much heed to impulses and strong impressions on their minds, as though they were immediate significations from heaven to them, of something that should come to pass, or something that it was the mind and will of God that they should do, which was not signified or revealed any where in the bible without those impulses. These impressions, if they are truly from the spirit of God, are of a quite different nature from his gracious influences on the hearts of the saints: they are of the nature of the extraordinary *gifts* of the spirit, and are properly inspiration, such as the prophets and apostles and others had of old; which the apostle distinguishes from the *grace* of the Spirit. 1 Cor. xiii.

One reason why some have been ready to lay weight on such impulses, is an opinion they have had, That the glory of the approaching happy days of the church would partly consist in restoring those *extraordinary gifts* of the spirit. This opinion, I believe, arises partly through want of duly considering and comparing the nature and value of those two kinds of influences of the spirit, viz. those that are ordinary and gracious, and those that are extraordinary and miraculous. The former are by far the most excellent and glorious; as the apostle largely shews. (1 Cor. xii. 31, &c.) Speaking of the extraordinary gifts of the spirit, he says, "But covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet I shew you a more excellent way." i. e. a more excellent way of the influence of the spirit. And then he goes on, in the next chapter to shew what that more excellent way is, even the grace of that spirit, which summarily consists in charity, or divine love.

And throughout that chapter he shews the great preference of that above inspiration. God communicates his own nature to the soul in saving *grace* in the heart, more than in all miraculous *gifts*. The blessed image of God consists in *that* and not in *these*. The excellency, happiness and glory of the soul, immediately consists in the former. That is a root which bears infinitely more excellent fruit. Salvation and the eternal enjoyment of God is promised to divine grace, but not to inspiration. A man may have those extraordinary gifts, and yet be abominable to God, and go to hell. The spiritual and eternal life of the soul consists in the grace of the spirit, which God bestows only on his favourites and dear children. He has sometimes thrown out the other as it were to dogs and swine, as he did to Balaam, Saul, and Judas ; and some who in the primitive times of the Christian church, committed the unpardonable sin. (Heb. vi.) Many wicked men at the day of judgment will plead, "Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works." The greatest privilege of the prophets and apostles, was not their being inspired and working miracles, but their eminent holiness. The grace that was in their hearts, was a thousand times more their dignity and honour, than their miraculous gifts. The things in which we find David comforting himself, are not his being a king, or a prophet, but the holy influences of the spirit of God in his heart, communicating to him divine light, love and joy. The apostle Paul abounded in visions, revelations, and miraculous gifts, above all the apostles ; but yet he esteems all things but loss for the excellency of the spiritual knowledge of Christ. It was not the gifts but the grace of the apostles, that was the proper evidence of their names being written in heaven ; in which Christ directs them to rejoice, much more than, in the devils being subject to them. To have grace in the heart, is a higher privilege than the blessed virgin herself had, in having the body of the second person in the Trinity conceived in her womb, by the power of the highest overshadowing her ; Luke xi. 27, 28. "And it came to pass as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and said unto him ; Blessed is the womb that bare thee and the paps that thou hast sucked ! But he said, Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." See also to the same purpose, Matt. xii. 47, &c.—The influence of the Holy spirit, or divine charity in the heart, is the greatest privilege and

glory of the highest archangel in heaven ; yea, this is the very thing by which the creature has fellowship with God himself, with the Father and the Son, in their beauty and happiness. Hereby the saints are made partakes of the divine nature, and have Christ's joy fulfilled in themselves.

The ordinary sanctifying influences of the spirit of God, are the *end* of all extraordinary gifts, as the apostle shews, Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13. They are good for nothing, any further than as they are subordinate to this end ; they will be so far from profiting any without it, that they will only aggravate their misery. This is, as the apostle observes, the most excellent way of God's communicating his spirit to his church, it is the greatest glory of the church in all ages. This glory is what makes the church on earth most like the church in heaven, when prophecy, and tongues, and other miraculous gifts cease. And God communicates his spirit only in that more excellent way of which the apostle speaks, viz. *charity* or divine love, "which never faileth." Therefore the glory of the approaching happy state of the church does not at all require these extraordinary gifts. As that state of the church will be the nearest of any to its perfect state in heaven, so I believe it will be like it in this, that all extraordinary gifts, shall have ceased and vanished away ; and all those stars, and the moon, with the reflected light they gave in the night, or in a dark season, shall be swallowed up in the sun of divine love. The apostle speaks of these gifts of inspiration as childish things, in comparison of the influence of the spirit in divine love ; things given to the church only to support it in its minority till the church should have a complete standing rule established, and all the ordinary means of grace should be settled ; but as things that should cease, as the church advanced to the state of manhood. 1 Cor. xiii. 11. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child ; but when I became a man, I put away childish things :"¹ compared with the three preceding verses.

When the apostle in this chapter, speaks of prophecies, tongues and revelations ceasing, and vanishing away in the church—when the Christian church should be advanced from a state of minority to a state of manhood—he seems to have respect to its coming to an adult state in this world, as well as in heaven ; for he speaks of such a state of manhood, wherein those three things, Faith, Hope, and Charity, should remain, after miracles and revelations had ceased ; as in the last verse ; and "now abideth (*μεινει, remaineth,*) Faith, Hope

and Charity, these three." The apostle's manner of speaking here shews an evident reference to what he had just been saying before; and here is a manifest *antithesis*, between *remaining*, and that *failing, ceasing, and vanishing away*, spoken of in the 8th verse. The apostle had been shewing how that all those gifts of inspiration, which were the leading strings of the Christian church in its infancy, should vanish away, when the church came to a state of manhood. Then he returns to observe, what things remain after those had failed and ceased; and he observes that those three things shall remain in the church, Faith, Hope, and Charity: and therefore the adult state of the church he speaks of, is the more perfect one at which it shall arrive on earth, especially in the latter ages of the world. And this was the more properly observed to the church at Corinth, upon two accounts; because the apostle had before observed to that church, that they were in a state of infancy, chap. iii. 1, 2. And because that church seems above all others to have abounded with miraculous gifts.—When the expected glorious state of the church comes, the increase of light shall be so great, that it will in some respect answer what is said, ver. 12, of *seeing face to face*. (see Isa. xxiv. 23. and xxv. 7.)

Therefore I do not expect a restoration of these miraculous gifts in the approaching glorious times of the church, nor do I desire it. It appears to me, that it would add nothing to the glory of those times, but rather diminish from it. For my part, I had rather enjoy the sweet influences of the spirit, shewing Christ's spiritual divine beauty, infinite grace, and dying love, drawing forth the holy exercises of faith, divine love, sweet complacence, and humble joy in God, one quarter of an hour, than to have prophetic visions and revelations the whole year. It appears to me much more probable that God should give immediate revelations to his saints in the dark times of prophecy, than, now in the approach of the most glorious and perfect state of his church on earth. It does not appear to me that there is any need of those extraordinary gifts to introduce this happy state, and set up the kingdom of God through the world; I have seen so much of the power of God in a more excellent way, as to convince me that God can easily do it without.

I would therefore entreat the people of God to be very cautious how they give heed to such things. I have seen them fail in very many instances, and know by experience that impressions being made with great power, and upon the minds

of true, yea, eminent saints—even in the midst of extraordinary exercises of grace, and sweet communion with God, and attended with texts of scripture strongly impressed on the mind—are no sure signs of their being revelations from heaven. I have known such impressions fail, in some instances attended with all these circumstances. They who leave the sure word of prophecy—which God has given us as a light shining in a dark place—to follow such impressions and impulses, leave the guidance of the polar star, to follow a *Jack with a lanthorn*. No wonder therefore that sometimes they are led into woful extravagancies.

Moreover, seeing inspiration is not to be expected, *let us not despise human learning*. They who assert that human learning is of little or no use in the work of the ministry, do not well consider, what they say; if they did, they would not say it. By human learning I mean, and suppose others mean, the improvement of common knowledge by human and outward means. And therefore to say, that human learning is of no use, is as much as to say that the education of a child, or that the common knowledge which a grown man has, more than a little child, is of no use. At this rate, a child of four years old, is as fit for a teacher in the church of God, with the same degree of grace—and capable of doing as much to advance the kingdom of Christ, by his instruction—as a very knowing man of thirty years of age. If adult persons have greater ability and advantage to do service, because they have more knowledge than a little child, then doubtless if they have more human knowledge still, with the same degree of grace, they would have still greater ability and advantage to do service. An increase of knowledge, without doubt, increases a man's advantage either to do good or hurt, according as he is disposed. It is too manifest to be denied, that God made great use of human learning in the apostle Paul, as he also did in Moses and Solomon.

And if knowledge, obtained by human means, is not to be despised, then it will follow that the means of obtaining it are not to be neglected, *viz. study*; and that this is of great use in order to a preparation for publicly instructing others. And though having the heart full of the powerful influences of the spirit of God, may at some time enable persons to speak profitably, yea, very excellently without study; yet this will not warrant us needlessly to cast ourselves down from the pinnacle of the temple, depending upon it that the

angel of the Lord will bear us up, and keep us from dashing our foot against a stone, when there is another way to go down, though it be not so quick. And I would pray, that *method*, in public discourses, which tends greatly to help both the understanding and memory, may not be wholly neglected.

Another thing I would beg the dear children of God more fully to consider of, is; how far, and upon what grounds the rules of the holy scriptures will truly justify their passing censures upon other professing Christians, as hypocrites, and ignorant of real religion. We all know that there is a judging and censuring of some sort or other, that the scripture very often and very strictly forbids. I desire that those rules of scripture may be looked into, and thoroughly weighed; and that it may be considered whether our taking it upon us to discern the state of others—and to pass sentence upon them as wicked men, though professing Christians, and of a good visible conversation—be not really forbidden by Christ in the new Testament. If it be, then doubtless the disciples of Christ ought to avoid this practice, however sufficient they may think themselves for it; or however needful, or of good tendency they may think it. It is plain that the sort of judgment which God claims as his prerogative, whatever that be, is forbidden. We know that a certain judging of the hearts of the children of men, is often spoken of as the great prerogative of God, and which belongs only to him; as in 1 Kings, viii. 39. “Forgive, and do, and give unto every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.” And if we examine, we shall find that the judging of hearts which is spoken of as God’s prerogative, relates not only to the aims and dispositions of men’s hearts in particular actions but chiefly to the state of their hearts as the professors of religion, and with regard to that profession. This will appear very manifest by looking over the following scriptures; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Psal. vii. 9, 10, 11, Psal. xxvi. throughout. Prov. xvi. 2, and xvii. 3, and xxi. 2. Job ii. 23, 24, 25. Rev. ii. 22, 23. That sort of judging which is God’s proper business, is forbidden, as Rom. xiv. 4. “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.” Jam. iv. 12. “There is one law-giver that is able to save or destroy; who art thou that judgest another? 2 Cor iv. 3, 4. “But with me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of man’s

judgment; yea I judge not mine own self; but he that judgeth me is the Lord."

Again, whatsoever kind of judging is the proper work and business of the day of judgment, is what we are forbidden, as in 1 Cor. iv. 5. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God." But to distinguish hypocrites, that have the form of godliness and the visible conversation of godly men, from true saints; or, to separate the sheep from the goats, is the proper business of the day of judgment; yea, it is represented as the main business and end of that day. They therefore do greatly err who take it upon them positively to determine who are sincere, and who are not—to draw the dividing line between true saints and hypocrites, and to separate between sheep and goats, setting the one on the right hand and the other on the left—and to distinguish and gather out the tares from amongst the wheat. Many of the servants of the owner of the field are very ready to think themselves sufficient for this, and are forward to offer their service to this end; but their Lord says, "Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest;" and in the time of harvest I will take care to see a thorough separation made; as Matt. xiii 28, 29, 30. Agreeably to that forementioned prohibition of the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 5. "Judge nothing before the time." In this parable, by the servants who have the care of the fruit of the field, is doubtless meant the same with the servants who have the care of the fruit of the vineyard, Luke xx. and who are elsewhere represented as servants of the Lord of the harvest, appointed as labourers in his harvest. These we know are ministers of the gospel. *Now* is that parable in the 13th of Matthew fulfilled: "While men sleep," (during a long sleepy, dead time in the church,) "the enemy has sowed tares;" now is the time "when the blade is sprung up," and religion is reviving; and now some of the servants who have the care of the field say, "Let us go and gather up the tares."—I know there is a great aptness in men who suppose they have had some experience of the power of religion, to think themselves sufficient to discern and determine the state of others by a little conversation with them; and experience has taught me that this is an error. I once did not imagine that the heart of man had been so unsearchable

as it is. I am less charitable, and less uncharitable than once I was. I find more things in wicked men that may counterfeit, and make a fair shew of piety; and more ways that the remaining corruption of the godly may make them appear like carnal men, formalists and dead hypocrites, that once I knew of. The longer I live, the less I wonder that God challenges it as his prerogative to try the hearts of the children of men, and directs that this business should be let alone till harvest. I desire to adore the wisdom of God, and his goodness to me and my fellow-creatures, that he has not committed this great business into the hands of such a poor, weak and dim-sighted a creature—one of so much blindness, pride, partiality, prejudice, and deceitfulness of heart—but has committed it into the hands of one infinitely fitter for it, and has made it his prerogative.

The talk of some persons, and the account they give of their experiences, is exceedingly satisfying, and such as forbids and banishes the thought of their being any other than the precious children of God. It obliges, and as it were forces full charity; but yet we must allow the scriptures to stand good that speak of every thing in the saint, belonging to the spiritual and divine life, as hidden. (Col. iii. 3, 4.) Their food is the hidden manna; they have meat to eat that others know not of; a stranger intermeddles not with their joys. The heart in which they possess their divine distinguishing ornaments, is the hidden man, and in the sight of God only, 1 Pet. iii. 4. Their new name, which Christ has given them, no man knows but he that receives it, Rev. ii. 17. The praise of the true Israelites, whose circumcision is that of the heart, is not of men but of God, Rom. ii. 29. that is; they can be certainly known and discerned to be Israelites, so as to have the honour that belongs to such, only of God; as appears by the use of the like expression by the same apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Here he speaks of its being God's prerogative to judge who are upright Christians, and what he will do at the day of judgment, adding, "and then shall every man have praise of God."

The instance of *Judas* is remarkable; whom—though he had been so much amongst the rest of the disciples, all persons of true experience, yet—his associates never seemed to have entertained a thought of his being any other than a true disciple, till he discovered himself by his scandalous practice—And the instance of *Ahitophel* is also very remarkable, David did not suspect him, though so wise and holy a man, so great

a divine, and had such great acquaintance with scripture. He knew more than all his teachers, more than the ancients, was grown old in experience, and was in the greatest ripeness of his judgment. He was a great prophet, and was intimately acquainted with Ahitophel, he being his familiar friend, and most intimate companion in religious and spiritual concerns. Yet David not only never discovered him to be a hypocrite, but relied upon him as a true saint. He relished his religious discourse, it was sweet to him, and he counted him an eminent saint; so that he made him above any other man his guide and counsellor in soul matters; but yet he was not only, no saint, but a notoriously wicked man, a murderous, vile wretch. Psal. iv. 11—14. "Wickedness is in the midst thereof; deceit and guile depart not from her streets: For it was not an open enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance: We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the house of God in company."

To suppose that men have ability and right to determine the state of the souls of visible Christians, and so to make an open separation between saints and hypocrites, that true saints may be of one visible company, and hypocrites of another, separated by a partition that men make, carries in it an inconsistency: for it supposes that God has given men power to make another visible church, within his visible church; for by visible Christians or visible saints; i. e. persons who have a right to be received as such in the eye of a public charity. None can have right to exclude any one of this visible church but in the way of that regular ecclesiastical proceeding, which God has established in his visible church.—I beg of those who have a true zeal for promoting this work of God, well to consider these things. I am persuaded, that as many of them as have much to do with souls, if they do not hearken to me now, will be of the same mind when they have had more experience.

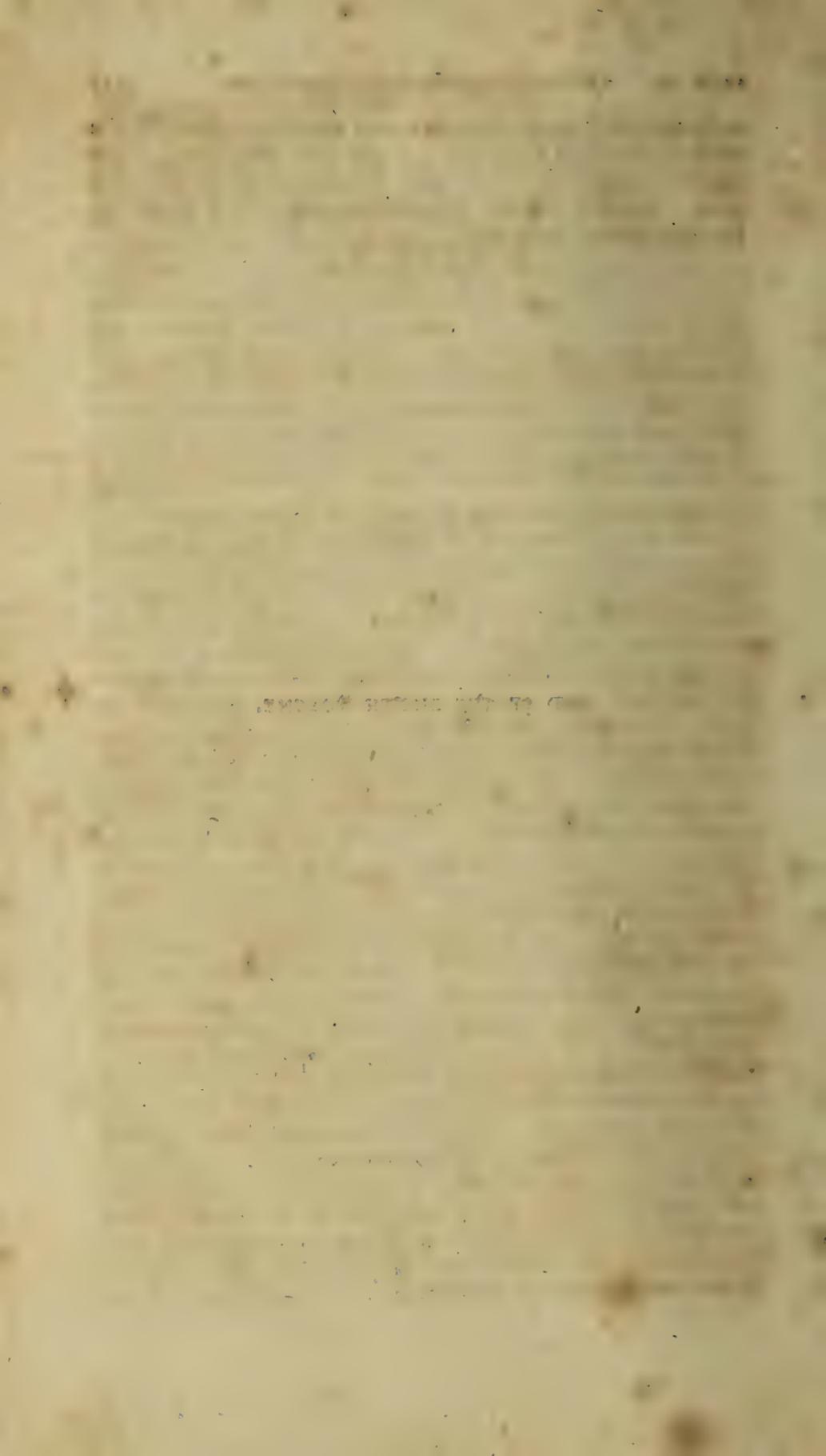
And another thing that I would entreat the zealous friends of this glorious work of God to avoid, is managing the controversy with opposers with too much heat, and appearance of an angry zeal; and particularly insisting very much in public prayer and preaching, on the persecution of opposers. If their persecution were ten times so great as it is, methinks it would not be best to say so much about it. If it becomes Christians to be like lambs; not apt to complain and cry when they are

hurt. It becomes them to be dumb and not to open their mouth, after the example of our dear Redeemer; and not to be like swine that are apt to scream aloud when they are touched. We should not be ready presently to think and speak of fire from heaven, when the Samaritans oppose us, and will not receive us into their villages. God's zealous ministers would do well to think of the direction the apostle Paul gave to a zealous minister, 2 Tim. ii. 24—26. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

I would humbly recommend to those that love the Lord Jesus Christ, and would advance his kingdom, a good attendance to that excellent rule of prudence which Christ has left us, Matt. ix. 16, 17. "No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish. But they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." I am afraid that the wine is now running out in some part of this land, for want of attending to this rule. For though I believe we have confined ourselves too much to a certain stated method and form in the management of our religious affairs; which has had a tendency to cause all our religion to degenerate into mere formality; yet whatever has the appearance of a great innovation—that tends much to shock and surprise people's minds, and to set them a talking and disputing—tends greatly to hinder the progress of the power of religion. It raises the opposition of some, diverts the minds of others, and perplexes many with doubts and scruples. It causes people to swerve from their great business, and turn aside to vain jangling. Therefore that which is very much beside the common practice, unless it be a thing in its own nature of considerable importance, had better be avoided. Herein we shall follow the example of one who had the greatest success in propagating the power of religion. 1 Cor. ix. 20—23. "Unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under

to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake that I might be partaker thereof with you."

END OF THE EIGHTH VOLUME.



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